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*THE MISSIONARY'S VADE-MECUM:—FIRST SERIES.*

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AN  
EXAMINATION  
OF THE  
CLAIMS OF ISHMAEL  
AS VIEWED BY  
MUHAMMADANS  
(BEING THE FIRST CHAPTER OF SECTION I.  
OF  
STUDIES IN ISLÂM)

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TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY:—  
IF THEY SPEAK NOT ACCORDING TO THIS WORD,  
IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM.

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## CONTENTS

	Page
Preface, ... ..	i-vii.
Analysis of the Argument, ... ..	ix-xiii.
The Examination of Ishmael's claims, ... ..	1-352
 Indexes:—	
1. The Qur'ân passages cited in this volume, ...	I.
2. The passages cited from the Old Testament, ...	II-IV.
3. The New Testament passages cited, ...	V-VI.
4. Index of general subjects, ... ..	VI-XIX.



## PREFACE.

The reason for writing this book needs to be stated.—It might well be asked in reference to it—What is the use of crushing dead flies? And, in truth, the religion of Muhammad has no better basis now than it had when its founder was alive to foster its early struggles. The light of history and the march of intellect have not improved its position in the judgment of the dispassionate seeker after a religion. But there are many scores of millions of our cotemporaries who are not able to think thus; and who accept this weird decoction of deism and idolatry, of truth and fable, as a veritable Revelation from 'the Father of Lights' for their guidance to heaven. It is among these that the lot of the missionary is cast; and it is in the hope of making him acquainted, in some measure at least, with the nature of the situation, that I have ventured to commend to his study, at some early period in his career, the pages which follow.

The difficulty of the task assumed by the evangelist who seeks the salvation of Muhammadans in any portion of the world, is so generally admitted as to have become almost proverbial. But the difficulty is, in truth, more imaginary than real. It does not arise from the logical strength of the Islāmic position, but from its weakness. It is always easier to deal with intelligence than with ignorance, and with avowed unrest than with self-contentment. 'They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.' The nature of the difficulty is well exemplified by the respective theological positions of the Muhammadan and the Hindū. In regard to his religion, the latter is a born philosopher—exceptions aside—and the former is by all reasonable men understood to be a born fanatic. It is impossible to give thoughtful attention to the religious system of the Hindū, without feeling that the men who made it in the first instance were earnest, great, and wise. But the study of the religious system of the Muhammadan awakens no such sentiment. Let but the missionary be possessed of the necessary information, and of skill in the use of it, and the Muhammadan, however learned he may be, is at the end of his tether in no time: but the Hindū, misguided though he is, can give a reason for the hope that is in him. A genuine Hindū philosopher, put on his defence, is no mean antagonist; but the Muhammadan, if not on the offensive, is nowhere. When he has to assume the defence of his religion, he is like a bull at bay: no position is too irrational for him, no dogma too self-contradictory, no stratagem too contemptible. Evangelists, at the beginning of their experience, are apt to be thrown off their guard by the evasive and unprincipled tactics of the Muhammadan opponent of Christianity. STUDIES OF ISLĀM, of which this is the first instalment, is designed to meet what the writer has himself felt to be a want at that stage.

The present imperfect Treatise is offered to the young missionary as a help to the apprehension of the bearings of a fundamental question. The dogma of which it treats—that Ishmael, and not Isaac, was 'the Child of Promise'—lies at the root of Islām. The point is so neatly put by Palgrave in his *Article on ARABIA* in the latest Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that we can hardly do better than cite his remarks here. Speaking of the Bani Quraish tribe he says,—'Of their pedigree (which, as is well known, includes that of Mahomet himself) we have



## PREFACE.

a carefully—too carefully, indeed, for authenticity—constructed chronicle, bringing the family tree up in due form to Ishmael, the son of Abraham, of whom the Koreysh figure as the direct descendants. In the same artificial annals, the Yemenite (or genuine) Arabs appear under the cousinly character of 'the Children of Joktan,' the son of Heber. On these points all Mahometan annalists are equally positive and distinct; all other Arab testimony equally adverse or silent. That a fable so utterly defiant of reasonable chronology, and even of the common sense of History itself, should have been adopted as matter of fact by Arab vanity and ignorance, is less surprising than that it should have found favour in the eyes of not a few, indeed of most, of our own European writers. Enough here to say that Mahometan chroniclers, by adopting as irrefragable historical authority the Jewish records, and then retouching them here and there in accordance with their own special predilections and tastes, have succeeded in concealing the truth of their own national identity and story from themselves and even from others, under an almost hopeless incrustation of childish fiction. This uncompromising indictment of the chronological tables on which The Faithful base their belief respecting the genealogy of their Prophet, harmonizes in its essential features with the conclusions arrived at by Mons. de Percival and with the view propounded in the present Treatise. In the course of the work, indications that my lot has been cast among the Musalmāns of India will doubtless appear to the experienced reader: but I venture to indulge the hope that the intelligent missionary who labours for the salvation of Muslims in any other portion of the world, will understand how to make allowance for this. The dogma, at any rate, is believed and defended wherever the adherents of The Prophet are found.

Thus much for the ground which the work covers and for the use which may be made of it. But does nothing in this department of controversy already exist in the whole range of literature?

As far as my knowledge goes, the subject has never yet been specifically and separately treated of by any advocate of Christianity. Allusions to it, indeed, more or less fragmentary, do occur in nearly all books on Arabia and Islām; but whatever literature exists in regard to the subject is unsystematized and incomplete. This remark applies to missionary literature in English or other tongues. Muḥammadan writers also—among whom should be mentioned, with great deference, Maulvi the Honourable Mr. Sayyid Ahmad Khān Bahādur, Companion of the Order of the Star of India\*—have in different ways glanced at it; but they have not written for the express purpose of working out the evidences of the dogma.

\* Although this eminent gentleman, and most learned and accomplished of all the defenders of The Faith of Islām, is no longer a sitting Member of the Council of the Government of India, it is only just and fair that the title which so distinguished a position confers should still be borne in mind whenever his name is mentioned. As a matter of fact, moreover, his retirement from that position took place while the present work was passing through the press. The occasion which the preparation of this work has forced upon me, of indicating what appear to be the fatally weak points in his treatment of the genealogy of Muḥammad, has awakened in me emotions of sincere pain in proportion to the high repute he bears for amiability. The great services which in a variety of ways he is discharging to the movements of his time, render him no less an ornament to the body politic than to the Faith which with so much learning and ability he defends.

The writer who has dealt most fully with it is Forster; but he runs the subject into the Books of DANIEL and REVELATION, and mixes it up with the bewitching, and interminable question of prophecy, fulfilled and unfulfilled. This, of course, renders his work calculated to be vastly attractive to minds versed in prophetic speculation, but it circumscribes its usefulness; for the recondite subject of Prophecy is one which it would be useless for the missionary to discuss in preaching to Muhammadans. It is a subject which has for the Muslim no interest and no meaning, and is consequently an edgeless tool. It clearly was not Forster's object to subject the question to such a mode of treatment as should render his work specially adapted to the Christian preacher to Muslims. He adopts a particular line or branch of the subject,—his object being to free the question of the Ishmaelitic descent of Muhammad from the sneers which Gibbon cast upon it. This he has achieved in a manner which is not likely to be ever surpassed. But inasmuch as he has used Biblical materials to carry the point, the apologists and the adherents of Islam find it prudent to ignore his learned contribution, and prefer to fall back upon the few fragmentary utterances of Gibbon, notwithstanding the scathing cynicism respecting the religious pretensions of Muhammad which he imports into them. For the rest, Forster goes far afield on the controverted subject of Prophecy,—which for the immediate purpose of the present Treatise would be unprofitable, however profitable and important it might be in other connexions. Besides all this, the labours of this accomplished student are marred throughout by an infirmity which very seriously affects his quotability as an authority. The most bewildering department of Arabian studies is undoubtedly the etymology of the names of places and tribes. In this department Forster is so unsafe, that all his attempts at identifying and localizing have to be received with constant circumspection. This would be fully acknowledged by any one who might subject the matter to due investigation. We say this, while cherishing, at the same time, the most profound respect for the industry of a man who has done more than any other man has ever done in this arid department of labour. Forster's work may be regarded as a most valuable contribution towards the study of a difficult subject, but as falling short of a final clearing up of its difficulties.—Arnold, also, wrote a book which he entitled 'Ishmael,' but the line of argument of which is more justly indicated by himself as an account of the 'Natural History of Islamism and its Relation to Christianity'. In point of fact, it is a miscellaneous—but, at the same time, a most helpful and useful—Treatise on the subject of Muhammadanism in general. I would say, without disparagement to either of these writers, that my aim has been to subject the question of the respective claims of Ishmael and Isaac to a method more calculated to meet the aim of the missionary.

The renderings of passages of the Qur'an which I have adopted are for the most part those of Sale, whom I consider to be, on the whole, one of the least prejudiced of the men who have translated that book; for there is such a thing as prejudice in favour of Islam as well as prejudice against it. Occasionally I have adopted the rendering of some other translator,—such as Rodwell, Lane, etc.,—but only when the difference in the renderings has been such as to affect the purpose of the citation. For the most part, the differences of the translations are merely in the wording,—the sense remaining untouched. I have not thought it well to burden the pages with various translations in the case of every passage quoted. Though every missionary who labours among Muhammadans may be supposed to be possessed of a copy of the Qur'an in the Original, yet (it being in the ordinary

editions a large book) he may not at all times have it at hand. I have therefore thought it might be useful if the passages from the Qur'an be all embodied in the present Treatise. Muḥammadans, moreover, avow entire distrust of all translations of the Qur'an,—especially of those made by persons not of their religion; such as Sale, Rodwell, and the others. The missionary will consequently find it an advantage to be able to shew the Muslim, without trouble or loss of time, the *ipsissima verba* upon which the argument, at its various points, turns. An explanation is due to the reader in respect of the imperfectness of the printing of passages from the Shemitish languages. The only type available at the press at which the work was printed, for the Arabic passages, was the Urdu type. Of type for the Syriac words there was none, and recourse was had of necessity to the Roman type. In the case of the Hebrew type, the Daghes, the Accents, and other points had in some instances to be omitted, owing to the difficulty of obtaining perfect fonts of Hebrew type in India. For all such matters the generous reader, who knows the difficulties which beset the work of printing in this remote Dependency, will find it easy to make allowance.

In common with all English writers of works touching on Arabia, I feel the necessity of putting in a word on the subject of the spelling of Arabic names. The variety that exists in the writing of these names in the characters of our language, arises not so much from any actual difficulty as from the ideas of writers. There is always scope for variety in writing the words of one language in the letters of another. Hence, even the most learned men, whose knowledge of the matter is beyond dispute, are found to write the name of The Prophet of Islām in many different ways. In some instances the variety referred to arises from a desire to avoid an appearance of divergency from current usages; in others, from a feeling of indifference; while some of it is attributable to the exigencies of some of the languages of Europe. The folly of consistent and simple accuracy in transliteration is sometimes urged on the ground that certain spellings have become stereotyped in popular usage, so that to diverge from them would be to put the reader off the scent. I admit that there are many names that occur in the following Treatise which are past recovery now; such as 'Jacob,' 'Ishmael,' 'Cairo,' etc.,—all of which forms are, nevertheless, hopelessly indefensible. But in English the spelling of these words is fixed: they are never spelt in more ways than one; and if they were spelt according to the true transliteration, they would not be recognizable as the names of the persons and places to which they have historically come to be attached. On the other hand, such words as 'Mehemet,' 'Kooraun,' 'Schieych,' 'Sejed,' 'Mesjed' and a swarm of others are spelt in endless variety: there is no settled and recognized way of spelling them. Where there are several ways of spelling a word, some one form must be decided on. As I had to choose, I preferred to transliterate with as much exactitude as possible, and felt it well to keep to one and the same spelling for each Arabic name all through the book. In a work of this nature, the haphazard spelling of the newspaper is clearly out of place. I do not see the use of perpetuating misspellings. The correct spelling is sometimes summarily condemned as pedantic; and the contrast between the English and the Continental pronunciation of such names as 'Paris,' 'Cenis,' etc., is instanced in point. But with all deference, I submit that there is, in point of fact, no real analogy between the cases; for in Arabic every letter is pronounced with uniform quantity and quality,—just as in German. Those who think the correct spelling of these names pedantic are not agreed among themselves as to how they should be represented in English. The

## PREFACE.

misspelling of Scripture proper names has become so established as to leave no option: it is moreover, uniform, and therefore not misleading. Besides, those names are differently spelt in Arabic and in Hebrew: thus, in Arabic the name of Isaac is spelt 'Is-hâq,' and in Hebrew 'Itzhâq.' What under these circumstances can be done? It is obvious that my principle of transliterating must stop at that line,—the line of unvarying English usage. If, in the meantime, exception be taken to my spelling of 'Safâ,' for example, let it be remembered that Burckhardt expects his English reader to pronounce, instead, the strange combination 'Szafa;' and if to 'Marwa,' let it be borne in mind that some high authorities have spelt it 'Merova;' while the name of the City of the Ka'ba is spelt in every variety of way conceivable, and yet in no way that has represented the pronunciation given to it by the Arabs themselves. Disregard of the correct spelling of proper names has proved to be one of the chief impediments in historical research. The Latin writers appear to have studied how to augment the difficulties of posterity when they wrote 'Aasmoth' for 'Hazaramâwat.' If Forster's derivations are to be trusted, it is not easy to acquit ancient writers of having gone out of their way who changed 'Râbigh' into 'Copar' or 'Copar' into 'Râbigh.' Exact transliteration (as far, at least, as the laws of different languages will admit of it) surely seems the best, at all hazards. I have this consolation, at any rate, that no method which has yet been adopted has escaped animadversion. Gibbon, Burton, Muir, Lane, Burckhardt, Palgrave, Niebuhr, Rodwell, de Percival, Sprenger, Lane, with many others, have all failed to hit the mark that might result in a settlement of the matter. But, in truth, the question is of no moment: if it were, it would, from its very nature, have been settled long ago. It is one of those things about which, whatever course be adopted, there is room for such endless diversity, that every man will condemn every other man's method, and will follow his own. The solution of the difficulty lies, we are sometimes told, in the spelling of Arabic names in such a way as to reproduce the sounds of them as uttered by the Natives; but the truth is, that nearly all the varieties of the spelling of these names among us have arisen from the attempts of scholars to conform to this very rule. The diversity has arisen from the fact that some of them have made one English letter—the letter c—do duty for three Arabic letters (ك, غ, ق) when there is no necessity, seeing that these three letters can be represented by quite different letters in English, and with a very near approach to exact equivalency (much nearer than can be attained by the letter c),—indicating better the sound, and answering, in point of power, to the Arabic letters. Thus, ك is adequately represented by k, and ق by q. There is no c in Arabic. The letter غ is the only one that presents any difficulty, as kh may be the equivalent not only of this letter, but also of ك aspirated, and more suitably so. As there is in the English alphabet no exact equivalent of غ (the sound itself being unknown in English) the distinction necessary to be made may be indicated by a stroke or a dot under the letters; thus, kh, or kḥ, —or some such device. A similar difficulty exists in the representation of other Arabic letters,—such as ف. The French have the advantage of us in that they are able to represent ف by f; e. g. 'Çafâ,'—thus distinguishing between this letter and س. Arabic scholars, moreover, in different parts of the world, give to some of the letters widely different pronunciations, as also do some even of the Arab tribes themselves. Under the circumstances, the misspelling of words seems to be at least as much to be deprecated as the adoption of some fixed principle of exact transliteration. The latter principle has the advantage of enabling the student more readily to find the word in the Lexicon. But on no prin-

ciple of transliteration can the true sounds be learned excepting by the ear. To transliterate accurately is at least as helpful and as reasonable as to transliterate inaccurately. I should add that the sign (') in the transliteration of Arabic words has not the same meaning as in Greek, where it indicates merely the so-called 'light breathing;' as in the word 'Ἰνδικός. In such words as 'Ali, Ka'ba it indicates that the vowel which it precedes or follows stands connected with the consonant *ʿ*, which has no equivalent in English; and in the word Qur'ân it indicates that the first syllable ends after *r*, and not before it.

Seeing that there is so much diversity, I do the reader the credit of taking for granted that nothing in the present work, relating to the subject of spelling, will occasion him any serious difficulty. All that is needed is an intelligent principle of transliterating clearly carried through. In the present work, no vowel in an Arabic word is 'long' unless marked with a circumflex. In Arabic the letter *u* has never the sound it has in the English words 'quite' and 'but,' 'turbid' and 'tumour.' In the words 'Muslim,' 'Qur'ân,' the first syllable never has the sound of 'mew,' 'kew;' it ends on the consonant following the vowel. The *s*, moreover, has not the *z*-sound of *s* in 'muslin,' but its proper sharp sound,—the *us* being pronounced exactly like *us* in the English word 'Puss.' So that these two words are pronounced, not 'Meuzlim,' but 'Mooss-lim;' not 'Kew-ran,' but 'Coor-ân,—the double *o* in each case having the sound of *oo* in such English words as 'coo,' 'coot.' This is the unvarying sound of short *u* in Arabic. The reader will now perceive the correct pronunciation of the word 'Muhammad,'—taking particular care not to pronounce the second syllable like the English word 'ham,' nor the third like the English word 'mad.' In the ill-used word 'Islâm,' again, the first syllable ends with *s*, with its sharpest sound; and the *a* is, as indicated, 'open,'—as in the English word 'far.' Thus, it is not 'Izlam,' but 'Is-lâm.' Again, a repeated letter (vowel or consonant) has always to be pronounced with a double measure of sound, but not with a hiatus. The form 'Mecca' is a purely fantastic spelling; and though it is so often adopted, it does not represent the correct pronunciation. The absence of the letter *c* in Arabic has led some writers to go in for an innovation in the form of 'Mekka.' But there is, in truth, no *e* in the word, nor is there even an *e* sound. The letter is, like the letter at the end, simply a short *a*,—which has to be pronounced like *u* in 'but,' 'cut,' 'muck,' and *a* in 'America,' etc. The only true spelling is 'Makka,'—pronounced not 'Mack' but 'Muckka,'—with both the vowels the same in nature and in quantity,—the organs of pronunciation lingering a little on the letter *k*, and then softly giving way. Long *i* is always pronounced as on the Continent of Europe; that is, as in the English word 'police.' Thus, 'Madina,' with both *a*'s short, is pronounced 'Mudeena,' not 'Mädäynah.' But with these few hints the reader will see his way through,—always remembering that in the pronunciation of proper names in the Oriental languages, it is a good rule to take care of the vowels, and then leave the accent to take care of itself.

Henceforth this little work—my companion during the spare moments of my last ten hot seasons in the plains of India—will have to take its own course, and sink or float as its merits deserve. No one can, in the face of such an array of works (by men who have written on every side of the controversy) as are here cited, suppose that I have not heeded 'the other side,' or have not listened to the newest as well as the oldest of what has been said; though the apologists of Islâm will, to be sure, not suspect me of having weighed the facts impartially. I confess my inability to arrive at a more favourable verdict upon the evidence than the one I have arrived

PREFACE.

vii

at. Whether this inability arises from mental <sup>obscurity</sup> or religious <sup>animosity</sup>, I can only leave to the judgment of competent persons. I am at least conscious of having tried to be impartial, and to refrain as earnestly against 'bearing false witness against my neighbour' Muhammad, as if he were a cotemporary residing in the next house. In commending the work to the charitable judgment of those whom it may interest, I do so with the feeling that no one can be more assured of its shortcomings than I am myself, and that the last and best word has not as yet been said respecting the great subject of which the work treats. If at times I have been betrayed into the use of language calculated to hurt the feelings of any, I beg, before parting company with the reader, to settle the matter at once by ample apology; and I ask any who may feel themselves aggrieved, to attribute such language not to a desire to hurt any fellow-traveller on the path of life, but to a desire to discount that only which every rational man, whatever may be his Creed, must desire to see destroyed.

*John Drew Bate*  
JOHN DREW BATE.

Allahabad : Nov. 1884.



# THE CLAIMS OF ISHMAEL.

## ANALYSIS.

	Page
Introduction:—The importance of the subject is shewn in its relation to the claims of Muḥammad, and in the attitude which Muslim theologians assume in regard to it, ... ..	
I. An inquiry into the <i>nature of the position</i> which the advocates of Islām thus take up, ... ..	6-133
1. The <i>authority</i> on which they ground their interpretation of 'the promise' made by God in regard to the posterity of Abraham, ... ..	6-59
1st. The very strongest support which they can adduce from the Qur'ān in favour of their interpretation is, at the best, ambiguous; for, ... ..	6-45
i. The Qur'ān no where <i>names</i> Ishmael in connexion with the question, ... ..	10
ii. Yet at the same time it expressly describes Isaac in this connexion by name as 'a righteous prophet', ... ..	11
iii. A point of Grammar calculated to enhance the ambiguity of the teaching of the Qur'ān regarding the subject, ... ..	11
iv. Not without significance are the allusions of the Qur'ān to <i>personal character</i> in connexion with the case, ... ..	11-12
The argument that the mere seniority of Ishmael gives him, as compared with Isaac, priority of rank among prophets, shewn to be unsound. And equally unsound is the argument from Islāmic Tradition, ... ..	12-45



- From all of which it follows that as far as the Qur'ân is concerned, the best argument that can be adduced in support of the dogma is based on nothing more than an inference from a certain *sequence of verses* in Sûra'e-SAFFÂT. But even though the Qur'ân could be shewn to support the dogma (which it cannot) the claims of Ishmael as compared with Isaac would still remain unproven.
- 2nd. The dogma, whether held by Muḥammad or not, is, in certain essential particulars, directly subversive of Muḥammad's own teaching; for
- i. If it is sound, the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians are corrupted, though Muḥammad gives in his adhesion to the question of their authenticity and genuineness, ... 46-48
  - ii. The author of the Qur'ân, moreover, in many places and in a variety of ways teaches the superiority of the Israelitish to the Ishmaelitish race, certain facts of history which Muslims quote in favour of their view, ... 48-59
- st. As to the question of Ishmael's connexion with Makka
- i. The account of Hagar's first departure from the patriarchal home, ... 60-133
  - ii. The narrative of her second departure thence in company with her son, ... 60-102
- From all of which it appears
- (1) That the opinion that Ishmael ever visited Makka is contrary to evidence: and ... 62-4
  - (2) That the narrative of her second departure thence in company with her son, ... 64-82
  - (3) That several other considerations of an important nature tell in the same direction—namely,
    - a. The fact that the occasion of Ishmael's departure from Abraham's home is not accurately stated in the Islâmic legends, ... 67-81
    - b. In regard to the localities where Hagar sojourned the Muḥammadan theologians draw some unguarded conclusions, ... 82-7
    - c. The errors of Muslims in regard to Ishmael's ... 87-133

	Page
age at the time of his removal from the patriarchal home, ... ..	95-100
2nd. As to the genealogy of Muḥammad, ... ..	103-33
i. As to the question whether Muḥammad himself held the opinion of his having <u>descended from Ishmael</u> , ... ..	104-9
(Evidence from the Qur'ān, from Muslim historians, and from European Orientalists,—Gibbon, Forster, de Percival, Sprenger, Muir, Deutsch, Burton, and Maulvi Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, among others.)	
ii. The exigencies of controversy have, however, led to his followers ignoring his own expressed views of the subject, ... ..	109-33
(The unsatisfactory nature of all efforts that have hitherto been made to establish the claims of Ishmael and of his seed to the promise in question, contrasted with the claims of the posterity of Isaac.)	
II. The Muslim dogma that <u>Ishmael was the Child of Promise</u> viewed in the light of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures ...	133-317
1. The predictions and promises of Scripture relating to Ishmael have been fulfilled in him and in his posterity ...	134-85
1st. This is true of those predictions and promises which preceded his birth, ... ..	134-79
i. As to the fixed locality where he and his posterity would eventually settle. ('In the presence of his brethren.') ... ..	135-41
ii. As to the character which would distinguish him and his posterity. (The wild ass and the Badawis.)	141-79
2nd. It is also true of those which followed that event, ...	179-85
i. Those made to Abraham, ... ..	179
ii. Those made to Hagar, ... ..	180-1
From all of which it appears that in none of the supernatural utterances regarding Ishmael is there anything to justify the Muslim dogma that the Saviour of the world would be a descendant of his, ... ..	
2. Elated by the admission that the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians contain predictions relating to Ishmael,	

	Page
Muhammadans are apt to lose sight of the fact that they contain predictions relating to Isaac as well,—in reference to whom, as distinguished from Ishmael, THE COVENANT was, beyond all controversy, made, ... ..	185-317
This is shewn	
1st. By the nature of the predictions that preceded Isaac's birth, ... ..	186
i. The striking contrast in the wording of the predictions relating to the two children, ...	186
ii. The importance of the circumstances attendant upon the predictions regarding Isaac, ...	186
iii. The emotions of Abraham on the announcement that Sarah would become a mother, ...	186
iv. The particular time of Isaac's birth specified, ...	186-91
v. The 'blessing' confirmed to that branch of the family by the repetition of the promise to Jacob after the decease of both Abraham and Isaac, ...	191-2
2nd. By the miraculous conditions which characterized that event, ... ..	186-200
3rd. By the import of events in the history of Isaac, ...	182-194
4th. By the history and mission of his posterity, ...	200-3
The question considered as to whether the posterity of Ishmael or the posterity of Isaac has been the greater 'blessing' to the world thus far. Muhammadanism and Christianity in relation to the world's advancement, ... ..	203
III. A few other considerations claim the attention of all parties concerned in the issues of this controversy, ... ..	317-49
1. It is important to bear continually in mind the Scripture usage of the word 'seed,' ... ..	317-18
2. The supernatural in connexion with the birth of Isaac, ...	318-20
1st. The age of Sarah is represented as carrying the event into the region of the miraculous, ...	319
2nd. The change of name in the case of both parents is enjoined by God in direct-connexion with the event, ...	319-20
3. The significance of the conflict of evidence of the Qur'an and the Pentateuch regarding the character of Ishmael, ...	321
4. The effect of the date of the contemplated immolation of Isaac upon the issues of the argument, ...	328

	Page
5. The supposition that Ishmael was 'the Child of Promise' renders the terms of the Divine allusion to Isaac paradoxical and untrue, ( <i>قوله</i> ) ... 329-30	329-30
6. The typical character of Isaac. (As to whether the author of the Qur'ân concedes this.) ... ( <i>قوله</i> ) 333-5	333-5
7. The significance of the re-institution of the rite of circumcision in the family of Isaac, ... 332	332
8. Coincident teaching of the Qur'ân and the New Testament on the subject of hereditary salvation, ... 336-40	336-40
9. Some final considerations on the Scripture use of the word 'seed,' ... 340-9	340-9
Conclusion :—	
The state of the evidence as thus reviewed shews that the whole question of the claims of Ishmael to be 'the Child of Promise' is entitled to reconsideration on the part of all earnest-minded Muslims, ... 349-52	349-52

✕  
CORRIGENDA.

Page

88, line 24, for '1727' read '1767.'

124, line 21, for 'Christian' and 'christian.'

271, line 7 from bottom, omit 'if they can to do so.'

(The reader is requested to mark these points in his copy. Besides these, it is hoped that any other press-errors which may be discovered will be only such as will occasion no misgiving.)

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EXAMINATION  
OF THE  
CLAIMS OF ISHMAEL  
AS VIEWED  
BY  
MUHAMMADANS.

THERE are many portions of our Scriptures in which Muslims profess to discover traces of Islâm and its founder. The investigation of one only of these will be the business of the present treatise.

It is maintained by most of the followers of Muḥammad that Ishmael, and not Isaac, was the Child of Promise; and they do so for the sake of the dogma that the predictions embodied in the promise made to Abraham had ulterior reference not to Christ but to Muḥammad, and to him only,—whom they accordingly designate *Ibni-Isma'il*, 'Son of Ishmael.'

This is one of the cardinal points of the Islâmic system; and Muslims maintain, accordingly, that it is through the seed of Ishmael and not through that of Isaac that all nations of the earth are to be blessed. So eager, indeed, are they to establish this dogma, that though they accept on the whole the statements of the Bible in reference to Ishmael, they yet are almost unanimous in the opinion that it was Ishmael and not Isaac whom Abraham was commanded to offer up in sacrifice.\* This opinion is held by

\* Mrs. Meer Hussan Ali, *Observations on the Mussulmans of India*, i. 260-61 (edn. London, 1832); Herklots, *Qânân-i-Islâm*, 66 (edn. Lond. 1832); Syed Ahmed Khan, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 91 (edn. Lond. 1870); Sale, *Al Coran*, 368 (edn. Tegg, Lond. No date).



nearly all the Muslims who have written commentaries on the Qur'an, and it is quite commonly maintained in public by Muhammadan opponents of the advocacy of Christianity. This explains the application, in Muslim parlance, of the expressions *Az-Zabîh* ('the Sacrifice') and *Zabîhu'l-lâh* ('the Sacrifice of God') as distinctive epithets of Ishmael, and as equivalents of his proper name.\*

So addicted are Muslim controversialists to the habit of speaking at random in the hope of catching the Christian off his guard, that we have even heard learned and venerable Muhammadans roundly assert in public, that Ishmael was actually slain in sacrifice by his father, and that he afterwards rose from the dead! When asked for proof of this they have asserted that it is written in the Taurât and in the Qur'an: but they may be safely challenged to quote a verse in proof of it from either of these books. The sacrifice of Ishmael, say they, took place on Mount 'Arafât,—one of the heights in the valley of Mina, in the Makkan territory. Inasmuch as he survived his father, the dogma of his resurrection follows of necessity.

Another account given by Muslim writers is as follows:—When Abraham founded the city of Makka, the Divine Being desired the patriarch to prepare a feast for Him. Upon Abraham's requesting to be informed what He would have on the occasion, He replied,—Offer up thy son Ishmael. Agreeably to this behest, he took Ishmael to the Ka'ba, and having laid him down, made several ineffectual strokes at his throat with a very sharp knife. Hereupon Ishmael said—Your eyes being uncovered, it is through pity and compassion for me that you allow the knife to miss. It would be better, therefore, if you blindfolded yourself with the end of your turban, and then sacrificed me. Acting upon his son's suggestion, the patriarch, having repeated the formula of initiation, *B'ismi'l-lâh Allâhu akbar* ('In the name of the Great God,'<sup>6</sup> here goes!), drew the knife across Ishmael's neck. Meanwhile,

\* Taylor, *History of Mohammedanism*, 23 (edn. Lond. 1834).

however, the angel Gabriel had dexterously substituted a broad-tailed sheep (Arab. *dumba*) for the lad; and Abraham, on uncovering his eyes, found to his astonishment the sheep slain, and his son standing behind him. This story is given with slight variations in many Muḥammadan books. It obviously is a parody of the narrative given in the Book of GENESIS. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, who writes in defence of Muḥammadanism, expressly affirms that Ishmael was never offered up in sacrifice.\* In this he agrees with the Persians, but whether for the same reason or not, is not quite clear; for they claim this distinction for Isaac because they consider themselves among his descendants.† As the object of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān was to establish the dogma of his own descent from Ishmael, it is possible that he may have been influenced by this reason in holding the opinion: but he does not expressly say so.

Hundreds of other assertions and fables of a similar nature and equally untenable, are put forward by Muslims in discussion and in print; and so wedded are they to these peculiar errors that their minds seem to realize no force whatever in any matters of fact adverse to such errors, that may be laid before them. That gifted and sagacious persons, as multitudes of Muslims are, should arrive at different conclusions regarding the facts of history is intelligible enough, and wholesome perhaps; but that these persons should disown or mutilate facts which are admitted by all the world besides, is a phenomenon which can only be explained by an enthusiastic attachment to a foregone conclusion. It has to be constantly borne in mind by any one who is desirous of arriving at actual facts, that when Muslims are engaged in the advocacy of their religion, they are not wont to speak according to their knowledge. A certain tradition which no Muslim likes to hear cited, and which they all disown if they can, assures them of the permission of Muḥammad to give utterance to an

\* Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Pedigree of Mohammed*, 3.

† Price, *Essay towards the History of Arabia*, 67 (edn. Lond. 1824).

untruth under certain circumstances. One of these conditions is *the defence of religion*.\* And accordingly, if Muslims can only snatch a temporary victory over an ill-informed or too ingenuous Christian by any distortion of fact or perversion of reason, they have the inward gratification of knowing that so far they have done what their religion requires of them.

'Such unblushing inventions,' says Sir William Muir,† 'will lead us to receive with suspicion the whole series of tales in which it is pretended that Mahomet and his religion were foreshadowed, so that pious men anticipated, long before the Prophet arose, many of the peculiar rites and doctrines of Islām. It was a fond conceit of Mahomet that Islām was as old as Adam, and has from the beginning been the faith of all good men, who looked forward to himself as the Prophet charged with winding up all previous Dispensations. It was therefore natural for his credulous followers to carry out this idea, and to invest the memory of any serious-minded man or earnest inquirer who preceded Mahomet, with some of the dawning rays of the divine effulgence about to burst upon the world. To this spirit we may attribute the palpable endeavour to make Mahometan tradition and the legends of Arabia tally with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and with Jewish tradition. This canon has little application to the biography of Mahomet himself, but it has a wide and most effective range in reference to the legendary history of his ancestors and of early Arabia. The desire to regard, and possibly the endeavour to prove, the Prophet of Islām a descendant of Ishmael, began even in his lifetime. Many Jews, versed in the Scriptures, and won over by the inducements of Islām, pandered their knowledge to the service of Mahomet and his followers. Jewish tradition had long been well known in Medina and in the countries over which Islām early spread, and

\* Wherry, *Commentary on the Qurʾān*, i. 118 (edn. Lond., 1882); Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. lxxiii—iv; Wāqidī, 133½, 227½; Hishāmī, 392; Mishqāt, ii. 427.

† Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. lxxix (edn. Lond. 1861. Edition of 1877, p. 591).

the Mahometan system was now made to fit upon it ; for Islâm did not ignore, but merely superseded, Judaism and Christianity, as the whole does a part, or rather as that which is complete swallows up that which is inchoate. Hence arose such absurd anachronisms as the attempts to identify Cahtân with Joktan (between whom, at the most moderate estimate, fifteen centuries intervene) ; and thus were forged the earlier links of the Abrahamic genealogy of Mahomet, and numberless tales of Ishmael and the Israelites, cast in a semi-Jewish semi-Arab mould. These, though pretending to be original traditions, can generally be recognized as plagiarisms from rabbinical lore, or as Arabian legends forced into accommodation with them.

Many points of a historical nature ally themselves with the present subject, such as the question as to who may have been the original occupants of Arabia ; what became of the immediate offspring of Ishmael's twelve sons ; the Abrahamic descent of the Quraishite tribe, of which Muḥammad is believed to have been a member. These and other points have already been treated with great learning and ability by Forster, Crichton, Muir, and other writers. The purpose of the present monograph is to shew that the dogma which Muslims ground upon the reputed Abrahamic descent of Muḥammad—*viz.* that Ishmael was what is known as 'the Child of Promise'—is one that is contrary to the evidence of the only authoritative document in existence which contains evidence on the subject,—that is, the Book of GENESIS.

The interest which Muslims have in maintaining this dogma arises partly from the fact that they wish to preserve the traditional sacredness of the Ka'ba (the Temple which forms the headquarters of the Muḥammadan religion at Makka) ; partly from a desire to protect the tradition of their own ecclesiastical relation to 'the Father of the Faithful ;' and partly from the dogma, held by the entire Muslim community, of the eventual triumph of the Muḥammadan creed over all other religious beliefs throughout the world. Here we may remark that the Ka'ba was from the

earliest period of known history prior to the public announcement of Muḥammad, the scene of idolatrous practices; it was, in fact, from time immemorial the seat of Arabian stone-worship and other forms of fetichism.\* Yet notwithstanding that idolatrous observances of the most benighted sort were carried on there, the traditions of the place were always strangely mixed up with the Biblical accounts of Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael,—the most important feature of this phenomenon being that many of the Scripture statements regarding Isaac were appropriated in these traditions to Ishmael. The narrative regarding these personages is already so well known to the readers of the Bible, that we may now safely introduce them forthwith to the controversy.

We will examine, in the first place, the nature of the position which the adherents of Islām thus take up; and, in the second place, we will view that position in the light of the canonical Scriptures of the Jews and Christians.

In looking at the subject from the Muḥammadan standpoint, we will examine the materials on which the Muslim bases his opinion; and in so doing we will shew that the very strongest support he can adduce for it, is at the best ambiguous.

Muḥammadans ground this opinion on what they allege to be the teachings of the Qur'ān. It happens, however, that they are not able to quote any clear and express text in support of it. They base it merely on a *sequence of verses* in a certain passage where Jehovah is represented as revealing to Abraham His covenant in regard to the patriarch's two sons. The passage occurs in Sūra xxxvii (SAFFĀT) 97—113, where we read,—

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ • رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ • فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعِزِّكَ  
يُغْلَمُ حَلِيمٌ • فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَئِي إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ

\* Bate, *Shrine of Islām* (a work on the KA'BA which will appear shortly).

فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا أَتَرَى ط قَالَ يَأْتِ أَفْعَلُ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ۝  
 فَلَمَّا اسْلَمًا ۖ وَتِلْكَ لِلْجَبِينِ ۝ وَنَا دِينَهُ أَنْ يَأْبِرَاهِيمَ ۝ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرِّيَاءَ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ  
 نَجْزِي الْمُكْسِتِينَ ۝ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ ۝ وَفَدَيْنَهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ  
 فِي الْآخِرِينَ ۝ سَلَامٌ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۝ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُكْسِتِينَ ۝ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِ  
 نَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ وَبَشِّرْ نَحْنُ بِاسْعَى تَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝ وَبَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى إِسْحَاقَ ط وَرَمْنِ  
 ذَرِ يَتَهُمَا مَعْنَى وَظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ مَبِينٌ ۝

'And (Abraham) said,—Verily, I (am) going unto my Lord who will direct me. O Lord, grant me a righteous (issuc). Wherefore WE acquainted him (that he should have a son who should be) a meek youth. And when he had attained to (years) of discretion (and could join in acts of religion) with him, (Abraham) said (unto him),—O my son, verily I saw in a dream that I should offer thee in sacrifice. Consider, therefore, what thou art of opinion (I should do). He answered,—O my father, do what thou art commanded. Thou shalt find me, if God please, a patient person. And when they had submitted themselves (to the Divine will), and (Abraham) had laid (his son) prostrate on his face, WE cried unto him,—O Abraham, now hast thou verified the vision. Thus do WE reward the righteous. Verily this was a manifest trial. And WE ransomed him with a noble victim. And WE left (the following salutation to be bestowed) on him by the latest posterity (namely)—Peace (be) on Abraham! Thus do WE reward the righteous. For he (was one) of our faithful servants. And WE rejoiced him with the promise of Isaac,—a righteous prophet. And WE blessed him and Isaac. And of their offering some (were) righteous doers, and (others) who manifestly injured their own souls.\*

\* The translation is Sale's; so also are the portions in brackets, which Sale prints in italics. Other translators (Lane, Rodwell, etc.) word their respective translations differently, of course; but the gist is the same: and therefore we have thought it unnecessary to burden our pages with all the translations that have been given of each passage we have occasion to cite. We shall only give the different renderings in those instances in which the difference is material to the argument.

Other passages might be quoted, in which Ishmael is singled out for commendation by the author of the Qur'an. Thus, in Sûra xix (MARYAM) 55, we read,—

وَإِذْكَرْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا ۝

'Remember also Ishmael in the Book. For he was true to (his) promise, and was an apostle, and a prophet.'

Again, in Sûra xxi (AMBIVÂ) 85, 86,—

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ط ۖ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ۝ وَادْخُلْنَاهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا ۚ إِنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝

'And (remember) Ishmael, and Edris, and Dhu'lkefl. All (these) were patient persons: wherefore we led them into Our mercy; for they were righteous doers.'

What the 'promise' was which is alluded to in the former of these two passages the Qur'an nowhere tells us. Baizâwî says that it was the promise he made to Abraham that he would submit to be offered up in sacrifice.\* Whether this was the author's meaning or not it is impossible to say. It is easy enough for a Muslim, as Baizâwî was, to place arbitrary interpretations upon passages, so as to make them support foregone conclusions.

These are the only passages which Muslims are able to cite when appealed to for evidence from the Qur'an in support of a dogma which gives the lie direct to the Biblical narrative, and aims at overturning God's covenant with the Jews. As the first of these passages is obviously the most important, and is the one on which they chiefly rely, it calls for our best attention.

In the first place, it is to be noted that the author of the Qur'an does not make it at all clear as to what his meaning here really is. Even his own followers, in fact, are not agreed among themselves as to whether the individual he here refers to is Ishmael or Isaac. Some of them hold the one opinion and some the

\* Sale, *Al Koran*, 252.

other, while some of them maintain that the person who figured in the case was not a son but a grandson,—Jacob.\* This assumption involves a double contradiction of history; for, Jacob was not a son of Abraham's, but a grandson; and it can be proved that he was not even born at the time of the sacrifice. Islāmic tradition embodies also another contradiction in connexion with the subject—viz. as to the place to which belongs the honour of having been the birth-place of Ishmael. In the valley of Mina, close by the block of stone on which the sacrifice is said to have taken place, is a small cavern, capable of containing four or five persons. In this cavern, Hagar is said to have been delivered of Ishmael! Such an assertion directly contradicts not Scripture only, but even Muḥammadan tradition itself, which says that Ishmael was born in Syria, and that his mother Hagar carried him to the Hijāz when he was as yet an infant at her breast. But a small cavern offering itself so conveniently, appears to have been sufficient to justify the substitution of Mina for Syria as a fit birth-place for the father of the Badawīs; more especially, says Burckhardt, as the fiction serves to attract so many pious donations from pilgrims to those of the Makkāwīs who sit around the place with out-spread handkerchiefs.† Those of them who are concerned rather for the establishment of their own ecclesiastical prepossessions than for the interests of truth, seek to make good their opinion by flatly contradicting the statements of the Jewish records. Say what they will, however, it is nowhere affirmed in the Qur'ān that the son to whom the author here alludes was Ishmael; nor does the author anywhere affirm that it was Ishmael whom Abraham was commanded to offer up.

It is remarkable how, with every desire to be strictly accurate, even learned and careful writers are not able to keep their statements free of the most manifest errors of fact. Thus, Price translates vv. 106—108 of the above citation,—‘Resigning himself

\* Burckhardt, *Travels in Arabia*, ii. 66 (edn. Lond. 1829).

† Ibid.



entirely to the will of his God, he made up his mind to the actual sacrifice of his son : but I myself sent him a victim,—a great ram, which he was directed to slay as a substitute for Ishmaël.\* No one could read this passage without arriving at the conclusion that Ishmael is actually named by the author of the Qur'ân as the son in question. The truth is that the Qur'ân does not specify which of the sons it was. But in *ver.* 112 of this quotation Muhammad represents Ichovah as saying,—‘And WE rejoiced him with the promise of Isaac, a righteous prophet.’ Putting together this verse and *ver.* 99—‘WE gave him tidings of a meek youth’—and remembering that the account of the contemplated sacrifice comes between them, Muslims draw the inference that the Qur'ân teaches that the son whose immolation was commanded was beyond all question Ishmael, and not Isaac.

There are several points that may be mentioned here which might fairly be quoted as militating against the theory that the author of the Qur'ân referred in this passage to Ishmael, as distinguished from Isaac.

In the first place, while on the one hand the very strongest support which Muslims can adduce in favour of their dogma, is shewn to be at the best ambiguous, on the other hand the dogma is in direct opposition to Muhammad's own teaching in other parts of the Qur'ân.

i. The Qur'ân nowhere names Ishmael as having been the son referred to in the passage.

This is remarkable when we note the detailed and circumstantial nature of the allusions believed by Muslims to have been made to him,—especially in regard to the subject of his birth, of the contemplated immolation, and of his future history. On the other hand, the author is careful, in this very passage, to mention Isaac by name. Now, if it be supposed that the author of the Qur'ân aimed in this passage at demolishing a dogma held alike

\* Price, *History of Arabia*, 67.

by his Jewish and Christian contemporaries and their ancestors as a fundamental and essential element in their respective faiths, we confess that these two circumstances taken together appear to our mind to be unaccountable.

ii. Take in conjunction with this point the fact that in *ver.* 112 it is not mentioned that the *birth* of Isaac was predicted, but merely that God announced to Abraham that Isaac would be 'a righteous prophet.'

In other words, there is nothing in the passage to shew that Isaac was not already in existence, and that he was not the son to whom the whole context refers. Nor is there a trace of evidence to shew that the person here spoken of as 'a righteous prophet' was not identical with the one referred to in *ver.* 99 as 'a meek youth.' So that for anything this passage contains to the contrary, it is in perfect harmony with the narrative as contained in our own Scriptures.

iii. Note, also, a point of grammar in the passage under consideration.

In the context (*ver.* 101) the great patriarch is represented as disclosing to his son his dream in which he had received the command to offer him up in sacrifice, and he addresses him "*Yâ bunniya'*!" (O little son). It may, indeed, be urged in reply that the author of the Qur'ân meant to represent the patriarch as having here used the diminutive form, not to indicate that the son referred to was the lesser of the two, but merely to indicate endearment. Obviously, however, it would not be prudent in either party to make too much of the point. It is only introduced here as one of the facts that arise in the study of the subject. Taken in connexion with the other points mentioned it appears not impossible that the intention of the author may have been, as suggested—*viz.* to indicate that the son he referred to was the younger of the two.

iv. The Muslim interpretation of the passage is very considerably out of harmony with what the text says regarding personal character.

The character for meekness which the text (*ver.* 99) attributes to the son to whom the author refers, accords rather with the known character of Isaac, and is in striking contrast with the character which Scripture and history alike attribute to Ishmael. Scripture teaches that Ishmael would be 'a wild man,' and that 'his hand would be against every man and man's hand against him.' That this was really the character of Ishmael no one can for a moment hesitate to admit; and it is equally agreed that the life of Isaac was that of a quiet shepherd. No less striking does the contrast become when we bear in mind the fierce relentless character of Ishmael's descendants through all the ages, down even to our own day. ✓

All these points, be it noted, come from that source which every faithful Muslim must regard as ultimate and decisive. Though opinions may differ as to the extent of their logical value when isolated from each other, there can be little doubt that the natural tendency of each of them is, as to their moral title, when taken together, to produce logical conviction. Those Muslims, therefore, who do not agree with the majority of their coreligionists in the interpretation they put upon this passage, are not without reason in their dissent from the view generally received.

Whether or not Muhammad himself really held the opinion that not Isaac but Ishmael was 'the Child of Promise,' is therefore a point on which, in the Qur'ân at least, he does not express himself. Most of his followers, however, confidently maintain that he did hold it; and in support of their view they cite the fact that the author of the Qur'ân gives to Ishmael priority over Isaac in point of rank among the patriarchs. Thus, in Sûra ii (BAQR) 133 we read,—

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي يَا قُلُوبًا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَهًا آٰبَاءَكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًُا وَاحِدًا ۖ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ۝

'Were ye present when Jacob was at the point of death, when he said to his sons,—Whom will ye worship after me? They answered,—We will worship thy God, and the God of thy fathers Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac,—one God, and to Him will we be resigned.'

And *ver.* 136,—

قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ بَ

'Say ye,—We believe in God, and in that which hath been sent down unto us, and in that which hath been sent down unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was delivered unto the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them.'

And *ver.* 140,—

أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا يَهُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَىٰ ط

'Will ye say,—Truly Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes were Jews or Christians?'

These are the only passages we know of in which the patriarchal precedence of Ishmael over Isaac is indicated by the order of the names. But even though it were possible to cite ten times as many passages, it would not affect the argument, for they would merely prove a fact which no one doubts.

If the Muslim is mainly concerned for the ascertainment of truth, he should be careful how he builds on such a foundation as this; for, this placing the name of Ishmael before that of Isaac may, from anything that appears in the Qur'ân to the contrary, not import anything more than the recognition by the author of that book of the mere circumstance of Ishmael's seniority,—a fact which no Jew or Christian calls in question. Keeping this view of the matter before us we should balance against all such passages as the three just quoted, those numerous passages in

which Muḥammad, in naming the members of the patriarchal household, actually omits all mention of Ishmael. As examples we may cite Sūra xxix ('ANQABŪT) 26, where we read,—

وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۖ

'And we gave him Isaac and Jacob.'

And Sūra xxxviii (SWĀD) 45, where we read,—

وَإِذْ كُنَّا عَبْدًا لِّإِبْرَاهِيمَ ۖ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۖ أُولَئِكَ الْإِيدِي ۚ وَالْأَبْصَارُ ۖ

'And remember Our servants Abraham and Isaac and Jacob,—men of might and vision.'

Had Ishmael been as important a person in Muḥammad's estimation as he is in that of Muḥammad's followers, it is simply inexplicable that he should in so many passages have passed him over in silence, while going at the same time out of his way to name a *grandson* of the patriarch's.

Here, however, as in so many other instances, Muslims avail themselves of their never-failing resource, TRADITION. In regard to most of the points of difference that exist between Islām and the ancient systems which it professes to supersede, Muslims quite frequently out-Muḥammad their leader, and where the Qur'ān fails them they fall back upon the *Aḥādīṡ*, traditional or patristic literature regarding Muḥammad. One of the chief characteristics, however, of the traditions embodied in this church literature, is their conflicting and mutually contradictory nature. Muḥammadans, accordingly, disagree entirely among themselves not only in regard to the authority of these traditions, but even in regard to their substance.

We may give a sample of these traditions as they relate to our present subject. They represent that Muḥammad said,—'I am the son of the two that were offered in sacrifice'—*And ibn salṭhain* (*lit.* the son of two sacrifices). Muslims allege that in saying this, he alluded to his reputed ancestor Ishmael and to his own father 'Abdu'l-lāh.\* The point with which we are at present

\* Price, *History of Arabia*, 67; Lane, *Selections from the Qur'ān*, 73 (edn. Lond. 1879); Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cclx.

concerned is not whether Muḥammad himself believed in his Ishmaelitic descent, but rather whether he teaches in the Qur'ān that Ishmael was the son whom Abraham was commanded to offer up in sacrifice. And the exceedingly doubtful nature of the tradition just quoted and of the interpretation which Muslims put upon it, should be evident when we remember the four points just mentioned, and when we give due weight to the circumstance that even Muḥammad himself gave up the question of his genealogy as one that was incapable of solution,—a point to which we shall give closer attention on a subsequent page. What the Biblical account is in regard to Ishmael is already known to the reader and will presently receive further attention.

Thus much for the allusion to Ishmael. The legend relating to the father of Muḥammad is substantially as follows. 'Abdu'l-Muttalib, the grandfather of Muḥammad, took a solemn vow that if God would vouchsafe to him ten sons he would devote one of them to *Him*. The circumstances are thus related in authorities cited by Sir William Muir.\* The discovery of the Well ZAMZAM by 'Abdu'l-Muttalib led to his becoming the virtual chief of Makka. A strange calamity, however, threatened to embitter his prosperity. During his early troubles, after the discovery of the Well, he was so much impressed with the sense of his weakness and inferiority in contending with the large and influential families of his opponents, as to pledge himself to the vow above referred to; for at that time he had but one son (Hārith) to support and encourage him against his more prosperous neighbours. There appears, however, to be grave reason for doubting whether the vow referred to involved actual immolation.

As far as Arabian tradition enables us to form an opinion, the custom of offering human beings in sacrifice to a deity was unknown at Makka.† The more probable state of the case would

\* Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cclix.

† Ibid. cclx. As to the practice in other parts of Arabia in this particular, see Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 908 (edn. Chatto and Windus, 1875), and Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cclxi, and the authorities whom they cite.

, seem to be that 'Abdu'l-Muttalib vowed that he would devote a tenth son to the great idol Hubal which stood within the Ka'ba. The Arabic term *nazr* would probably be the word he employed,—whence the Biblical term 'Nazarene' or 'Nazarite' (one devoted to God); and the idea of a son being devoted to the service of a deity may have become known among the Arabs from the circumstance of its being current among the Jews. But however natural to the Judaistic system may have been the custom of devoting a son to God's service, it would have lacked the sanction of precedent at Makka; and, as it formed no part of the Makkan ceremonies, it would not have readily moulded itself to the creed there held. The sacrifice of human beings in Arabia was only incidental: so much so, that even in the case of cruel and ferocious tyrants who are alleged to have done it uniformly and on principle, the authority seems doubtful. Seeing then that the devotion of a son to God, whether by immolation or in any other way, was a thing unknown at Makka, it is not easy to see how the thing could have been carried out there. Muḥammadans, however, hold that while Abraham acted rightly, inasmuch as he was following out a Divine behest, the father of 'Abdu'l-lāh acted wrongly, in making so rash a vow. This fact lends countenance to the opinion that though the legend referred to is more or less exaggerated in point of detail, it is not pure invention.

The important part played in the affair by the idol Hubal, requires that we here insert a few notes regarding that interesting personage. But there is the usual discordancy between authorities. Some points, however, seem clearly agreed upon in reference to the matter. In the first place, all agree that the idol was an importation; and the fact is used to explain how image-worship came to supersede, in the Hijāz, that 'Religion of Abraham' which, according to the Islāmic creed, was the ancestral religion of that territory.—The man who is credited with having thus first introduced idolatry there is Amr bin Luhai,—called by Sale 'Amru'.

and by Burckhardt 'Ammar.\* He is said by Burckhardt to have been of the tribe of Qussai, and by Osborn to have belonged to the Bani Khuzá'a.† Shahrastāni and most Arabian authors assert that prior to the ascendancy of the Khuzá'ites in the Hijáz, the One only God was worshipped at the Ka'ba, and that Hubal was imported by their chief 'Amr bin Luhai. The point, however, is not one on which they all agree. Thus, Wāqidī states that Hubal was the chief representative idol of the Kināna tribes; and that it was anciently called the idol of Khuzaima, the supposed father of the Kināna and some tribes related to them. These more ancient worshippers of Hubal were nomadic tribes, and lived to the west of the Sacred Territory, and on the high road that leads to the north. Al Fāsī also, dissents from the common view, and calls Hubal emphatically, an idol of the Quraishites. He says that the idols imported by 'Amr bin Luhai were three—viz. Al Khalasa (which was worshipped to the south of Makka) Nahik (also called Muhādzir), and Muta'm.‡ The general opinion, however, credits 'Amr bin Luhai with having introduced the idol among the worshippers at the Ka'ba. The unsoundness of this opinion we have shewn elsewhere,§ where we prove that the idolatrous institutions of Makka were ancient in his time.

This man 'Amr, or 'Amrū, flourished at the commencement of the third century of the Christian era, and was king in the Hijáz, on which account the term 'Málik' is also applied to him, and frequent allusion is made to him in the Arabian historians. || There is difference of statement as to the place whence the idol was brought. Azrākī says that Amrū imported it from Hyt in

\* Sale, *Preliminary Discourse*, 14; Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 298-9; De Percival, *Essai sur l'Histoire des Arabes*, i. 223 (edn. Paris, 1847).

† Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 298; Osborn, *Islam under the Arabs*, 75 (edn. Lond. 1876).

‡ Sprenger, *Life of Mohámmad*, 7 (edn. Allahabad, 1851).

§ Bate, *Origin and History of the Ka'ba* (a work that will appear shortly).

|| Pocock, *Specimen Historie Arabum*, 82 (edn. Oxon. 1806); Osborn, *Islam under the Arabs*, 75; Syed Almed Khan, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 54.



Mesopotamia;\* Abulfida, however, tells us that it was brought from Balkâ, in the province of Damascus, in Syria.† According to the Merâ'id-al-ittilâ, Balkâ is situated between Damascus and Wâdî-il-Kora; and is the locality of the ancient Moabites, to the east of Judæa, near the Dead Sea.‡ De Percival remarks that the name 'Balkâ' recalls that of Balak, the son of Zippor, king of the Moabites.§ At the time of Amrû's visit, the district was occupied by Amalikites—viz. by the Banî Samaidâ, or Banî Amila-al-Amâlik.|| This man made a journey into Syria, and on his return he passed by Ma'âb, the town of Moab or Areopolis, in the district of Balkâ, where he saw the people worshipping images.¶ He asked the meaning and object of the homage thus rendered, and was informed,—‘These are our gods, formed in imitation of the celestial bodies and of human figures. When we ask of them victory, they give it us; when, in times of drought, we ask for rain, they send it; wealth,—they bestow it; in danger,—they accord us their succour. In short, all the prayers we address to them are heard, and granted.’ How well, exclaims the learned Pocock, does the name of the idol, which may be derived from the Hebrew הָבֵל *Hevel*, ‘breath,’ ‘wind,’ ‘puffing,’ ‘vanity,’ suit such a figment as this!\*\* Amr, however, was much rejoiced at this intelligence, and asked that one of the idols might be given to him. They gave him Hubal; and he carried it away to Makka, and placed it in the Ka'ba.†† Such is the rendering given by Pocock to the expression 'ALA' ZAHRU'L-KA'BA, used by Shahrestânî, which Pocock translates

\* Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 299.

† Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 14; Pocock, *Specimen*, 97.

‡ De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 224.

§ NUMB. xxii. 10; JOSH. xxiv. 9.

|| De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 23, 224; Ibn Khâldân, fol. 12, 130; Osborn, *Islâm under the Arabs*, 75.

¶ Pocock, *Specimen*, 97; De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 224; Osborn, *Islâm under the Arabs*, 75.

\*\* Pocock, *Specimen*, 97.

†† Pocock, *Specimen*, 97; Osborn, *Islâm under the Arabs*, 75.

'Ad posteriorem (*sen* exteriorem) Caabæ partem.' He explains that some writers relate that some of the images were within the Ka'ba, and others round about it. But De Percival renders the phrase, 'sur la Càba,'—an expression that can have but one meaning,—the one given it by Sayyid Ahmad Khân who records that this idol was 'placed on the summit of the Kaaba.'\* It seems a curious circumstance that the idol should have been placed in such a position; yet we learn on good authority that prior to its attaining the honour of supremacy among the idols of the Ka'ba, it passed through a term of probation,—standing for a considerable period outside the Ka'ba, patiently awaiting admission.† The information of Dr. Crichton regarding this point seems rather 'mixed.' Speaking of the fate of Hubal on the occasion of Muḥammad's conquest of the city, he says,—'Mounted on the shoulders of the Prophet, Ali pulled down the great idol of the Khozaites from the top of the Kaaba.'‡ If it was on the outside of the Ka'ba at that time, it must have been degraded after its promotion. Yet the statement of Muir is tantamount to the same thing: he speaks of Hubal as having been on that occasion 'in front of the Kaaba, as the tutelary deity of Mecca.'§ As the matter was 'referred to the arrows of Hubal within the Kaaba,' and those arrows were 'thrown' in front of the image, there seems to be some oversight here. Sprenger, who gets the information from Wāqidī, says that after the time of Qussai at least, this idol stood behind the Ka'ba over a well.|| The only well there in our day is ZAMZAM.¶

It is not improbable that this particular idol was chosen by Amrū for the Ka'ba, for it was supposed to have the power of

\* De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 224; Syed Ahmed Khan, *Customs of the pre-Islamic Arabians*, 12; and his *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 54.

† Arnold, *Islam and Christianity*, 26 (edn. Lond. 1874); De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 250.

‡ Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 277 (edn. Edinburgh, 1834).

§ Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, iv. 127.

|| Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 7.

¶ Bate, *The well Zamzam* (a work that will appear shortly).

giving rain,\*—the great desideratum of Arabia. The king who had thus imported the idol proceeded to engage in worshipping it and offering sacrifices to it,—exercises in which he was followed by his compatriots.† Hubal became eventually the chief among the idols of the Ka'ba,—the presiding god in the Temple, and the principal deity of the Quraishites who were the guardians of the Temple,‡—the man to whom it was eventually indebted for its promotion being the same man that had introduced it from Syria.§ This preëminence of Hubal was evinced by the fact that in front of it the casting of lots with arrows took place.|| Its exaltation to this supremacy among the idols of the Ka'ba took place probably at the time when that sanctuary of the Banî Quraish came to be the pantheon for the whole of Arabia.¶ If so, we have here a noteworthy exemplification of the truth of the proverb 'Facilis descensus Averni'; for, the degeneration of the endless congeries of tribes in that immense country from 'the Religion of Abraham' to fetichism in some of its coarsest forms must have taken place within a mere fraction of the lifetime of one man,—Amr bin Luhai, to whom it owed its elevation to the supreme status among the idols, being said to have been the first to introduce idolatry among his fellow-countymen.\*\* De Percival, however, shows that idol-worship in the Hijâz existed long before this time; and he is of opinion that the crime of which the Musalmân authorities accuse Amrû is that he first introduced into the Ka'ba images already held in veneration by the Arabs.†† Such a fact would help to remove the difficulty of making out how, if Hubal was the first

\* Pocock, *S'ecimen*, 97; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 14; Irving, *Life of Mahomet*, 30, 151 (edn. Lond. 1876).

† Abulfida, *Historia ante-Islâmica* (edn. Fleischer, Leipzig, 1831) 136; *Sirâta'r-Rasûl*, fol. 12; De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 224.

‡ Arnold, *Islâm and Christianity*, 26.

§ Ibid. ✓

|| Ibid.

¶ Ibid.

\*\* Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 299; De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 223-4.

†† De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 224.

idol introduced into the Ka'ba, it can be understood to have been elevated to supremacy among the idols there. There is no doubt that in subsequent times it was chief.\* It is important, however, to qualify this by saying that it was chief among what might be termed the moveable or adventitious idols of the Ka'ba,—for an exception must always be made in favour of the Black Stone, which has from time immemorial been the fixed and permanent idol of the Ka'ba.† Wâqidî, speaking of the dignity of Hubal, says that it 'received almost as much homage as the Black Stone.'‡ This could never be second to Hubal or any other idol,—being a bonâ-fide bit of the celestial paradise, which is destined to escape the final conflagration by returning bodily, on the Day of Resurrection, to the place whence it came.§

Hubal, whose name هبل is sometimes spelt 'Hebal' and generally 'Hobal,' was a huge image made of red agate (Arab. 'aqîq) in the shape of an old man with a long heavy beard.|| One of his hands having by some accident been broken off, was replaced by the Quraish by a hand of gold.¶ In connexion with this idol there are seven arrows of the kind that were used by the Arabs for the purpose of divination.\*\* There is no agreement among writers as to whether, ordinarily, it was the custom to place the whole seven arrows in one hand, or in both, or whether they were not rather placed in front of him, and therefore between his hands, but not in either of them.†† De Percival says that they were

\* Pocock, *Specimen*, 97; Arnold, *Islam and Chistianity*, 26; Macbride, *Mohammedan Religion Explained*, 37 (edn. Lond. 1857).

† Bate, *The Black Stone* (a work that will appear shortly).

‡ Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 7.

§ Burton, *Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah*, ii. 65 (edn. Lond. 1855).

|| Pocock, *Specimen*, 98; Reinaud, *Monumenta Musalmânica*, i. 246; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 14; De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 224-5; Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 74 (edn. Lond. 1877); Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 277.

¶ Pocock, *Specimen*, 98.

\*\* Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 14.

†† Pocock, *Specimen*, 98. 37 51

consecrated to the idol and kept near it ('près d'elle').\* The arrows that were kept for this kind of ceremony were, like those with which the Arabs were wont to cast lots,—that is, they were without heads, points, or wings; and they were distinguished from other arrows by the technical designations *Azlâm* (pl. of *zalam* or *zulam*) and *Qidâh* (pl. of *qidh*) 'arrows of divination.'† These curious arrows were kept in the temple of the idol in whose presence they were consulted.‡ Seven such arrows as we have described were accordingly kept in the Ka'ba.§ There was 'inside the Ka'ba a hollow or cavity in which were preserved the offerings and other treasures belonging to the Temple: the image of Hubal was situated over this hollow.||

Sale says that though seven arrows were kept for divination before this idol, yet in actual divination three only were made use of.¶ On one of these were written the words—'My Lord hath commanded me;' on another—'My Lord hath forbidden me;' and the third was blank. If the arrow containing the first of these inscriptions was drawn, it was deemed an indication of the Divine approval of the enterprise concerning which the oracle had been resorted to: the arrow containing the second inscription indicated the reverse of this: but if the blank one happened to be drawn, the arrows were mixed and thrown over again till a decisive answer was obtained by one of the others appearing twice out of the three throws.\*\* Though it is usually a most unsafe thing to differ with Sale, yet it is not easy to escape the suspicion that there is some slip in the account he thus gives. If three

\* De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 265; ii. 310.

† Pocock, *Specimen*, 98-99; De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 261, 265; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 14; Syed Ahmed Khan, *Customs of the pre-Islamic Arabians*, 12; *Christian Remembrancer* (Jan. 1855) 118.

‡ Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 90.

§ Ibid.

|| Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 300; De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 250; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cclvi.

¶ Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 90.

\*\* Ibid.

arrows only were used, how came there to be so many as seven? It is not sufficient to reply that seven was 'the perfect number,' for we shall presently see that each of these seven arrows bore an inscription indicating that it was designed for actual use in divination. Besides, in the case of 'Abdu'l-Muttalib now under consideration, it is expressly said that six arrows were used,—in pairs, it is true; but still six, and not 'three.\* Now, besides Hubal, there was another idol at Tebâla which was much venerated among the Arabs and was used for exactly the same purposes as Hubal, and consulted by means of the wingless and unpointed arrows.† It was called 'Zîu'l-Khulusa.' This is the form given it by de Percival. It is also spelt by Arabian writers Zû'l-Khalusa, Zû'l-Khalsa, Zû'l-Khalasa,—this last being the form most commonly used. The form applied by de Percival to the idol is not very commonly so applied,—it being not usual to prefix the relative pronoun to any but generic names. The most usual designation for the idol is 'Al Khalasa,' and for the temple, 'Zîu'l-Khalasa,'—the name being by some attributed to the fact that the tree called 'Khalas' (a kind of clinging tree, like the vine) grew in the locality. The temple was also called 'Ka'batu'l-Yamâma' or 'Al Ka'batu'l-Yamâniyya,' from its geographical position; and 'Al Ka'batu'sh-Shâmiyya,' because its door faced the north (Syria = Shâm). The temple belonged to several different tribes, among which were the Bani Khatha'm, the Bani Daus, and the Bani Bijla. This idol Al Khalasa was eventually demolished by command of Muhammad after his conquest of Makka.‡ In consulting it three arrows only were used, on each of which was written one of the words 'Command,' 'Prohibition,' 'Delay.'§

\* De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 261; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cclvi.

† De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, ii. 310; D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, Art. ACDAH; Reinaud, *Monument: Musulmanica*, ii. 14.

‡ Lane, *Arabic Lexicon*, p. 786, col. 2 (edn. Lond. 1863); Richardson, *Persian and Arabic Dictionary*, p. 532, col. 2 (edn. Johnson, Lond. 1852).

§ De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, ii. 310; *Christian Remembrancer* (Jan. 1855) 119; Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 82.

The correspondence both in number and in sense, of these two sets of oracles, suggests the possibility that Sale may have overlooked the distinction between the two idols.

Among the pagans of pre-Islâmic Arabia there were ordinarily seven arrows used in consulting the oracle of Hubal.\* On these arrows were written certain fixed responses from which some sort of oracle could be gathered in any matter whatever that might be referred to the idol. On each of the arrows of Hubal was inscribed one of the following seven terms,—‘The price of blood;’ ‘Yes;’ ‘No;’ ‘It is yours;’ ‘Assistant;’ ‘Stranger;’ ‘Water.’† The arrows were thrown into a bag, and drawn by an official of the Ka’ba specially charged with that duty, for which he received one hundred dirhams and a camel.‡ The technical designation of this official was *Sâhib al-Azâm* or *Sâhib al-Qudâh* ‘Master of the Arrows’ (=Master of Divination, or ‘The Diviner’ *par excellence*). Generally speaking, the oracle was consulted before anything of moment was undertaken,—domestic, commercial, political. As examples we may mention the circumcision of a lad, the fixing of a child’s paternity, going to war, concluding a treaty, starting on a journey, entering a state of matrimony, ascertaining the guilty party in a murder, tracing a person’s genealogy, and such-like.§ Before the operation of drawing the arrows began, the applicants had to offer to Hubal the following petition:—‘O divinity, the desire to know such or such a thing has brought us to Thee. Make us to know the truth!’|| Having consulted the oracle, persons were expected to take action upon the information or advice thus received.

\* Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cclvi.

† De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 265.

‡ Ibid.

§ Pocock, *Specimen*, 327 seqq.; D’Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, Art. *ACDAH*; Sale, *Prod. Disc.* 90; De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 265; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cclvi.

|| De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 265; *Sirdûs-r-Rasûl*, fol. 23; *Journal Asiatique* (Sept. 1838), 227.

The question as to whom this idol Hubal was supposed to represent, elicits information of some interest. The learned Dr. Pocock, whose *Specimen Historiæ Arabum* has not yet been surpassed as the ultimate authority in critical questions relating to Arabia and Islâm, derives the name of it from the Hebrew הַבְּעַל *Habba'al* or הַבֵּל *Habbêl*,—and, by ignoring the vowel-points, suggests the appropriateness of הַבֵּל *Hevel*, 'vanity!'<sup>\*</sup> Among the Arabs, Hubal appears to have had a double character, in which respect he resembled the Syrian idol Baal (properly, Ba'al), who was regarded both as the founder of the Babylonian empire, and as the Sun personified as a deity.<sup>†</sup> The opinion that Hubal was the same as the Babylonian or Syrian idol Ba'al or Bêl, or synonymous with it, is in fact supported by the testimony of the Arabian authorities, who relate that it was originally brought from Syria or Mesopotamia.<sup>‡</sup> Of course, the Arabian writers do not maintain that Hubal was identical with Ba'al: they admit, however, that it was an astronomical deity, which Ba'al also is believed to have been,—whose designation, by the way, like that of 'the sun' among ourselves, always appears with the article—'Habba'al.'<sup>§</sup> Further, Herodotus (and after him, Rawlinson) held the opinion that Hubal was 'the Jupiter of the Arabians,'<sup>||</sup>—presumably because he was believed to have the power of sending rain. Once more, Pocock mentions that this idol is supposed by some to have been the one known in Arabian literature as 'the Image of Abraham' which was among the idols demolished by Muḥammad when he 'cleansed the Ka'ba' of idolatry in the eighth year of the Hajira.<sup>¶</sup> This was the opinion of Abulfida, who expressly states that the image

<sup>\*</sup> Pocock, *Specimen*, 97-8.

<sup>†</sup> Arnold, *Islâm and Christianity*, 27.

<sup>‡</sup> Ibid.

<sup>§</sup> Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. BAAL (edn. Lond. 1863).

<sup>||</sup> Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, i. 318; Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. BAAL; Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 300; Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, 134.

<sup>¶</sup> Pocock, *Specimen*, 98-9.



of Abraham occupied the chief place in the Ka'ba, and that he was represented by Hubal.\* Hishâmî says that among the images and pictures that covered the walls of the Ka'ba was a figure of Abraham in the act of divining by arrows.† If this was not Hubal, there were more deities than one who divined by arrows; and if it was, how happens it that this image was inside the Ka'ba, and the image of Hubal outside? It has to be borne in mind, however, that much of this, though it is all of it from the best sources, is in great measure conjectural,—Hubal remains a mystery:‡ as to the actual identity of the idol, its history and origin, and the etymology of its name, no satisfactory knowledge exists.§

We may add that this practice of divining by arrows was followed not only by the Arabs, but also by the ancient Greeks and other nations of ancient times.|| It is, moreover, particularly mentioned in Scripture: for example, in EZEK. xxi. 21—23 we read,—

‘The king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination. He made bright his arrows, he consulted with images, he looked in to the liver. At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem,—to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint battering-rams against the gates, to cast up a mound, to build a fort. And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight,—to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken.’

The allusion to Babylon recalls the statement that it was from Mesopotamia that the idol Hubal was imported into Makka.¶

\* Arnold, *Islam and Christianity*, 27. Cnf. Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 405.

† Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, iv. 128; Hishâmî, 364.

‡ Arnold, *Islam and Christianity*, 27.

§ Pocock, *Specimen*, 98. The curious reader may follow up the subject in Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic and Sorcery*, 133-4 (edn. Lond. 1877) and his *Lettres Assyriologiques*, ii. 164—178.

|| Potter, *Antiquities of Greece*, i. 334; Sale, *Prod. Disc.* 90.

¶ Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 299.

The comment of Jerome on this passage is in remarkable agreement with what we are told of the custom as it existed among the ancient Arabs. He writes,—‘He shall stand in the highway and consult the oracle after the manner of his nation, that he may cast arrows into a quiver and mix them together, being written upon or marked with the names of such people, that he may see whose arrow will come forth, and which city he ought first to attack.’\*

The superstitious practice of divination was forbidden by the author of the Qur’ân. Thus, in Sûra v (MAIDA) 4 we read,—

‘Ye are forbidden to make division by casting lots with arrows: this is an impiety!’

Notwithstanding this very plain prohibition, Burton came upon what he believes to be a relic of this practice of the pagan times of Arabia. At no less a place than Madîna he found a religious performance called ‘Istikhâra,’ or more commonly ‘Khîra,’ in which the will of the Divine Being is consulted by praying for a dream in one’s sleep, revealing to those concerned how any affair (such as a marriage, etc.) ought best to be settled. But they consult God not by prayer alone, but also by the rosary, by opening the Qur’ân, and other devices of a similar nature, which devices bear blame if a negative be deemed necessary. Burton attests that this kind of superstition obtains throughout the Muḥammadan world.†

To return, however, to the narrative on p. 15. Years rolled on, and the rash father found himself surrounded by a family of six daughters,—and ten sons.‡ The sight of these sons daily reminded him of his vow. According to one legend, his friends among the Makkan aristocracy, held him back just as he was about to plunge the knife into the vitals of the luckless boy, and offered a ransom. But he would not heed their remonstrances. (

\* Pocock, *Specimen*, 329; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 90-91.

† Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 287.

‡ Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cclix.

At length they prevailed upon him to refer the matter for decision to a certain female diviner at Khaibar, who suggested that the matter should be referred to the arrows of Hubal within the Ka'ba. This woman, it seems, had as her friend a certain demon who was wont to obtain stealthily for her secret information from the celestial world. Accordingly 'Abdu'l-Muttalib bade his sons accompany him to the Sacred building. Each of them was made to write his own name on a lot, and the lots were finally made over to the officer of the Temple, who cast them in the usual way. The lot fell upon 'Abdu'l-lâh, the youngest and best-beloved of his sons, who, handsome in appearance, brave in spirit, and expert in the use of the bow, had endeared himself to his parent and to his numerous family connexions. The vow devoting him to the deity must needs be observed; and how else could it be fulfilled excepting by the sacrificial knife? The daughters wept and clung around their fond father, who, willing enough to avail himself of any feasible suggestion, was readily prevailed upon to cast lots between 'Abdu'l-lâh and ten camels,—the current fine for the blood of a man. And should the deity accept the ransom, the father need not hesitate to spare his son. But the lot fell yet a second time upon 'Abdu'l-lâh; and again, and with a similar result, was a lot cast between him and *twenty* camels. At each successive attempt 'Abdu'l-Muttalib added ten more camels to the stake. But the deity appeared to inexorably refuse the vicarious offering, and to require the blood of the son. At length, at the tenth throw, when the ransom had reached a hundred camels, the deity relented, and the lot fell upon the numerous victims. Joyfully did the anxious father release 'Abdu'l-lâh from his impending fate, and taking a hundred camels, he slaughtered them between the little hills Safâ and Marwa.\* The inhabitants of Makka feasted upon the camels and what remained was left to the beasts and birds,—the family of 'Abdu'l-Muttalib refusing to taste of them. It was this

\* Bate, *Shrine of Islam*.

'Abdu'l-lâh who eventually became the father of Muḥammad; and it is on the strength of this legend, coupled with the legend regarding Ishmael, that he is called 'the son of the two sacrifices.\*

Tabari states that the party among the Makkans who opposed the slaughter of 'Abdu'l-lâh, were the Bani Zuhaira, and that on their expostulating with 'Abdu'l-Muttalib, he, in imitation of what had been done in the case of Ishmael, substituted a ram for his son. This, however, was rejected as insufficient, and at length it was agreed upon that a hundred camels should be the commutation for the blood of 'Abdu'l-lâh. Tabari states that from this event the fine for homicide was ever afterwards fixed at a hundred camels.†

In regard to all this it has to be observed that there appears to be grave reason for doubting whether the vow in question, whatever its import may have been, was followed by any attempt to really put into execution the sacrifice of a human life. From that day, however, the father of Muḥammad was looked upon by the Arabians of Makka as Isaac is looked upon by Jews and Christians; while 'Abdu'l-Muttalib is held to be analogous to Abraham. They, however, overlook the circumstance that whereas the vow regarding 'Abdu'l-lâh was purely voluntary on the part of his father and was confessedly made with no other object in view than the obtaining of a certain number of sons, the sacrifice contemplated by Abraham was not in fulfilment of any such vow, was not the result of any selfish desire on the part of the patriarch, and was in pursuance of a direct and explicit behest of the Almighty. And while, moreover, the legend referred to makes it evident that 'Abdu'l-Muttalib regretted the rashness of his vow, and did all in his power to shew his unwillingness to fulfil it, there is no evidence whatever that Abraham,—albeit, his son was his 'only son,'—sought in any way to elude

\* Consult Azraky's *History of Mekka*. See also Stobart, *Islam and its Founder*, 44 (edn. 1876; Christian Knowledge Society).

† Price, *Essay on Arabia*, 67; Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahâbys*, i. 362 (edn. Lond. 1831).

the exact and literal fulfilment of the Divine <sup>heavenly</sup> command. Not only, again, is there no evidence to shew that 'Abdu'l-Muttalib was required by God, as Abraham was, to immolate his son, but even the Muslim legends themselves shew that the vow was uncalled-for,—as far, at least, as God was concerned. In the one case, both father and son were equally worthy of commendation; in the other, they are equally destitute of any claim to it. In the one case the fact of the Divine acceptance of the sacrifice was signified by an unfallen angel; in the other (the partisans of Islām themselves being witnesses) the mode of escape from the actual fulfilment of the vow was indicated by a demon to a sorceress,—and this, by a stratagem in which a demon is represented as inveigling the Divine Being into a divulgence of His secret. In the one case, again, a substitute was provided miraculously by the Almighty,—and this without any co-operation of the great patriarch himself; in the other case, so great was the unwillingness of the father to make the sacrifice, that he himself substituted no less than ten camels in the first instance, and (according to the legend) declared his readiness to sacrifice all the camels he had, if need were. The one case is an instance of prompt and unquestioning obedience to God; the other is an instance of a ludicrous and irreverent attempt on the part of a mortal man to drive a hard bargain with Him. In the one case, the scene is solemnly enacted in the presence of the Divine Being alone; the other is declared by the Islāmic legends to have been enacted in an idol-temple, and before an image the worship of which even Muḥammad himself is believed by Muslims to have denounced and overthrown. In the one case, the sacrificer was the chosen servant and 'friend' of the one living and true God; in the other he was an avowed worshipper of numerous images, and was after his death pronounced in the presence of one of his own sons to be 'an inhabitant of hell,'—and this by Muḥammad himself.

There can be no doubt that this whole story, like so many of the other stories connected with the Muḥammadan system, owes

its origin to the exigencies of controversy. There is an evident attempt to become possessed of a story intimately connected with Muḥammad and at the same time vividly recalling the surrender by Abraham of his best-beloved son.\* The unfortunate thing is that the Muslim traditionists know so little where to draw the line between the probable and the improbable, that no man of understanding could accept their narratives even when there may be a substratum of truth in them. 3, 151

It is still further worthy of remark that in various Muslim traditions the Jews are declared to have been the avowed enemies of Abdu'l-lāh,—and this for no other reason than that they knew quite well that he would yet become the father of Muḥammad,—the promised seed of the son of Abraham,—and they, accordingly, plotted to take his life. It is remarkable, too, that since Muḥammad's time no record has ever come to light shewing that such a doctrine was ever held among the Jews,—not even in their own annals. Indeed, although the Jews are second to no people in their jealousy for the preservation of their national records, yet as far as they are concerned, such a doctrine is unknown and unheard-of.

Such is a specimen of Muslim tradition in regard to the present subject. The thing to mark is that not only are the Muḥammadan traditions contradictory of the best-authenticated records in existence that relate to the subject,—viz. the records of the Jews,—they are also contradictory of one another. As to their contrariety to the Jewish records, it may here be still further noted that some of them assert that the scene of the immolation which Abraham contemplated was not Mount Moriah in the land of Canaan, where the patriarch resided, but some eight hundred miles thence, in the valley of Mina, near Mount Thabir, in the neighbourhood of Makka. They also assert that the animal which was eventually substituted for Abraham's son was the identical ram that Abel had offered up in sacrifice many ages

\* De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 264.

before, and which was brought down to Abraham from the celestial paradise for the purpose.\*

The contrariety thus seen to exist between the traditions of the Muhammadans and the records of the Jews, is fully borne out by the teachings of the Qur'an. Though the question of the priority of Isaac over Ishmael—considered as heir of the promise made by Jehovah to Abraham—is so clearly stated in GENESIS and is corroborated in language no less clear in the Epistle to the GALATIANS, yet the author of the Qur'an never as much as hints at the circumstance that the matter was thus plainly and emphatically set forth in those inspired records. This is the more noteworthy from the fact that he says he was <sup>authorised</sup> commissioned by the Almighty to 'attest' and 'confirm' them,—in other words, to bear witness to their inspiration and veracity as they then existed in the hands of the Jews and Christians. How incongruous this state of things is with Bible teaching as it relates to the matter now under consideration, is known no less to Muslims themselves than to Jews and Christians; and they account for it by roundly asserting that the followers of Moses and of Jesus have combined together to corrupt and alter the text of their own Scriptures with the special view of excluding the claims of Muhammad.

If it were indeed a fact that God had by means of the prophets and apostles of Scripture-times foretold of one who should transcend and supersede all the Heaven-sent messengers who had preceded him, it would surely have been the business of that prophet not to abrogate or nullify the messages which God had sent to mankind by the agency of his predecessors, but rather to fulfil them. And those men of faith who held that God had such a gracious purpose in store for them and for mankind, could have had no motive for obliterating, at any period prior to the time of his appearing, all reference to him in those records which they believed to have been entrusted to them by Heaven. Why, indeed, should Jews and Christians, of all persons in the world,

\* Sale, *Al Koran*, 369; D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, Art. ISMAIL.

to whom in particular the gracious promise would in that case have been delivered, have decided ages beforehand that such a divinely-sent person would eventually turn out to be the special enemy of themselves? And if, on the other hand, they did not suspect that he would be their enemy, but knew rather that he would be their friend, what motive could they have for expunging from their Scriptures every allusion by which they might identify him at his appearing? Even in the case of the *despoilers* of the faithful, of whom warning was previously given in their Scriptures, they jealously preserved every scrap of prophecy concerning them. How much more, then, would they do so in the case of predictions concerning one who was to be their comforter and saviour, and the last and greatest of all that noble line of prophets of whom they were so proud? Though the Jews rejected Jesus at His coming, yet did they themselves guard most jealously the records which foretold His advent; and they were as a nation all earnestly expecting Him,—not as their foe but as their deliverer. It is, consequently, incredible that if their Scriptures had so much abounded in distinct and glowing allusions to one who should come after Him, and who should be even greater than He was, they should not have preserved with equally jealous care those predictions of their Scriptures which related to him also, and watched for his appearing with still greater eagerness. It is incredible that they should with their own hands have voluntarily and wittingly destroyed their own hopes! Surely such a hypothesis implies rather that Muslims, who without a shadow of evidence cling to it with such tenacity, have, in regard to this subject at least, abdicated their claim to the exercise of their understanding.

Perceiving the absurdity of the position, some of the Muslim traditionists affirm that large numbers of Jews and Christians were thus watching for the advent of Muhammad,\* and that on hearing of his advent, they at once embraced him. We are even

\* Taylor, *History of Mohammedanism*, 104-5.



told that the Arab women were at this time in the habit of praying for male children, in the hope that of them the long-expected prophet might be born. There is one passage in the Qur'an that might seem to bear them out in this opinion. It occurs in Sûra xcvi (BAIYINA) 1, 2, where we read,—

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ۝  
رَسُولٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُطَهَّرَةً ۝ فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ ۝

(1) 'The unbelievers among those to whom the Scriptures were given, and the idolaters, did not stagger till the (clear) revelation had come unto them,—an apostle from God, rehearsing (unto them) pure pages containing right discourses.'

In interpreting this passage the Muslim commentators, Zamakhsharî and Jallâlu'd-dîn, maintain that before Muḥammad came, Jews, Christians, and even the worshippers of idols, unanimously believed in the fact of his future advent, and lived in expectation of it; and that they declared that they would persevere in their respective religions till such time as he should come,—when they would forthwith abandon their different creeds and become his followers. The text teaches that they did not waver in their attachment to their various faiths, nor in their promises to recognize and follow Muḥammad, till the time when he actually came, when, through envy and unbelief, they rejected him.\*

(2) Not *all* of them, however. And those among them who eventually came over to the side of Muḥammad are believed by the Muslim commentators to have done so by reason of their recognizing in him the Messiah described and foretold in the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians. This, however, is a purely *ex-parte* interpretation put forward by the partisans of the Islâmic faith, and is wholly destitute of historical support. One of the best-known instances of this is the one given by Prideaux.

\* Sale, *Al Koran*, 495; Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 102-3 (Lee's edn. 1824).

Muhammad, on the decease of both of his parents and after them of his grandfather, was while yet a boy taken care of by one of his uncles, Abu Tālib, whose chief occupation was the caravan-trade with Syria. He early inducted the young Muhammad into the same business. When, on one occasion, he was pursuing this calling, he arrived at Bostra, a city on the confines of Syria; and while in the market-place attending to his uncle's business, he was seen, the legends say, by a learned Christian monk of Bostra, named Buhaira, who instantly recognized him to be the great prophet whom, according to Muslim legends, not only Jews but Christians also were expecting to appear. With great eagerness Buhaira pressed through the crowd to get to Muhammad, and, seizing his hand, foretold of him then and there all those great things which afterwards came to pass. The means by which he recognized Muhammad in the midst of the crowd was the celebrated *Nāru'n-Nalī*, or 'Prophetic Light,' which Muslims believe to have always shone on his face. Other Muslims, however, affirm that the mark by which the monk recognized him was the *Khātimu'n-Nalī*, or 'Seal of the Prophet,'—the seal of Muhammad's prophetic mission which was from the first stamped between his shoulders. It is quite a curious instance of the contradictoriness of Muslim traditions that notwithstanding the statement of Buhaira's having seen Muhammad and his mark, it is actually related in some of them, that he had already lost his sight by weeping, through his long desire to see the great prophet that was to appear!\*

The truth is, that Muhammad did not become acquainted with this man Buhaira till some years later on, when he carried on business for the widow lady whom he eventually married.†

Four Treatises, *The Life of Mahomet*, 21. (Nisab, Hish)

† Prideaux, *Life of Mahomet*, 5, 6 (7th edn. 1718); Pocock, *Specimen* 53, 168, 170. For more information concerning this man, the reader may consult Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. 36; Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, 87; and Arnold, *Islam and Christianity*, 40. Deutsch is of opinion that Buhaira, upon whose very existence he throws doubt, was in all probability a Jew. Arnold, judging from the monk's names Bākhīr, Heb., and Serdjis [= Sergius, Grk. Georgius], is of opinion that he was a converted Jew, —the name 'Serdjīs' having been given him on the occasion of his baptism.

Examples of persons who were thus expecting that a great prophet would arise in Arabia are what are called in Muḥammadan literature the *Four Enquirers*—*vis.* 'Uthmān and Warāqa (cousins of Khadija, Muḥammad's first wife), 'Ubaidu'l-lāh bin Jahsh (second-cousin of Muḥammad), and Zaid bin Amr (grandson of Nufail and cousin of 'Umar). All these were members of the tribe of the Quraish. The third of them is said to have embraced Islām, and to have subsequently emigrated with some of his co-religionists to Abyssinia, where he abandoned that faith and became a Christian. Of the fourth of them Tradition says that he condemned the idolatrous sacrifices of the Ka'ba, reprobated the burying alive of infant daughters, and 'followed the Religion of Abraham.' But not content with such assertions, the traditionists add that this man possessed distinct knowledge regarding the coming prophet, and even left his 'salutation' to be delivered to him when he should appear. They add that he even described his person, predicted that he would be of the family of 'Abdu'l-Muttalib, and said that he would emigrate to Madina.\*

This from its very nature is clearly one of those stages at which fancy and credulity would be busy; and, according to the traditionists, the known sentiments of the founder of Islām would encourage rather than discourage such sentiments. It was, says Muir, a fond conceit of his that Islām was as old as Adam, and that it had from the beginning of the world been the faith of all good men who looked forward to himself as the great prophet who would be charged with the unexampled dignity of winding up the Dispensations that preceded his time. It was therefore natural that his credulous followers should catch up this idea and carry it out as far as possible, investing any serious-minded man or earnest enquirer who preceded Muḥammad with some of the dawning rays of the divine effulgence about to burst upon the world.†

\* De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 321.

† Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. lix.

Of such sort are the tales regarding the Enquirer Zaid, who, it is said, spent his life in searching for 'the Religion of Abraham,' till at last, a monk, meeting him at Balkâ, sent him back to Makka to await the prophet about to arise there.

We may here quote some samples of these tales as given by Sprenger; though, indeed, the lesson they chiefly exemplify is how easily the human intellect lends itself, in the realm of religion, to what is palpably incredible and absurd. It has not, says he, escaped the attention of Arabic historians that the great revolution of the establishment of a new religion was foreshadowed. In the introduction to the most ancient biography of Muḥammad we find a chapter inscribed 'An account of four men who without revelation saw before Mohammad's time the fallacy of paganism.' Of that chapter the following is a translation:—One day the Quraishites celebrated an annual feast, and assembled before one of their idols. They expressed their adoration for it, slew sacrifices, surrounded it, and went round it. Four men, however, (the four above mentioned,) kept secretly aloof, and said—Let us be friends and open our hearts to each other. And they agreed. One said to the others—By God, you see our tribe does not know the true religion. They have corrupted the religion of Abraham, and are worshipping a stone, and walking round it, though it neither hears nor sees, and can do neither good nor harm. Friends, seek for yourselves, for you are not in the right path. These four men consequently dispersed over the country, and went in search of the orthodox faith of Abraham. The subsequent history in each case was as follows:—Waraqa obtained the Scriptures, acquired from those who believed in them a considerable share of knowledge, and at last embraced Christianity. Mons. de Percival says that Waraqâ had been entertaining the idea that an Arabian prophet was at hand, and spoke to his cousin Khadija, wife of Muḥammad, in such a

\* Hishâmî, 55—59; Wâqidi, 30.

manner as to confirm her belief in her husband's mission.\* This, however, must have taken place before Waraqa's conversion to Christianity,—unless, indeed, we are to suppose that he regarded Muḥammad as an apostle of that religion.† The more immediate occasion of Waraqa's adoption of the Christian faith would appear to have been the defection of Muḥammad from the principles of the sect of the Hanīfs, of which sect they were both of them members.‡ Mons. Ernest Renan appears not to have been aware of the fact of Waraqa's conversion to the religion of Jesus: at least, he makes no mention of the fact, though it is as well-attested as any of the other facts of that period.§ Such an assumption, though difficult to admit, is more charitable than the alternative one—viz. that Renan preferred passing over such a fact in silence; for this assumption, besides the implied indictment against his integrity and ingenuousness, would tend to shake the faith of self-respecting men in all history written by disbelievers in the Christian faith. Thus much for Waraqa, the first of the four.

Ubaidū'l-lāh, a son of 'Umāima, sister of Muḥammad's father, remained a sceptic, as to the religion of the Quraish, till at length he embraced the religion of Muḥammad. He emigrated to Abyssinia with his wife, Umm Habība, daughter of Abū Sufiān, who also embraced Islām; and on his arrival in Abyssinia he adopted the Christian faith, and died a Christian. When he passed the followers of Muḥammad, after he had embraced Christianity, he used to say—'We see; and you try to see.' His widow at length became one of the wives of Muḥammad. 'Uthmān bin Hawairith, at one time king of Makka,|| went to the

\* Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 336.

† The *Christian Remembrancer* for January 1855, p. 106.

‡ Arnold, *Islām and Christianity*, 36; Rodwell, *El Koran*, Pref. xvi-xvii (edn. Lond. 1876).

§ Renan, *Mahomet et les Origines de l'Islamisme* in the *Revue des deux Mondes* (1851), tom. xii p. 1090.

|| Sprenger, *Life of Mohamammad*, 34.

emperor of the Byzantines, and professed the Christian religion. As for Zaid, he remained as he was; he neither turned Jew nor Christian. Up to so recent a period as the time of de Percival this man was almost unnoticed by European savans.\* it is therefore due to the reader that a fuller account should be given of him than of the other three.

This man renounced the religion of his tribe, would not worship idols, and abstained from eating what had died of itself, as also blood, and what had been sacrificed to idols.† He also disapproved of burying girls alive.‡ He used to say—'I worship the God of Abraham.' And he was wont to expose the errors of his tribe. Asmâ, mother of 'Urwa, related that she had seen Zaid, when he was a very old man, leaning his back against the Ka'ba and saying—'O Quraishites, by Him in whose hands the soul of Zaid is, none of you follow the religion of Abraham, except myself!' Then he continued—'O Lord, if I knew what form of worshipping Thee is most acceptable to Thee, I would adopt it: but I do not know it.'§ Then he prayed, resting his forehead on the palms of his hands. Ibn Is-hâq says—I heard that Sa'id, son of Zaid, and 'Umar bin Khattâb, his second cousin, requested the prophet to intercede for the soul of Zaid. The prophet said—'Yes.' Zaid said the following verses on leaving the religion of his tribe—'Shall I believe that there is one Lord, or one thousand? Is the government of this world divided? I have given up Al-Lât and Al-'Uzza, for I am strong-minded. I neither believe in Al-'Uzza, nor in her two daughters. Nor do I visit the idol of the Banû 'Amr' (a branch of the Banû Asad), nor do I believe in Ghanam.' He was my Lord when

\* De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 321.

† Muḥammad forbade the same to his followers; see Sûra ii (BAQR) 68.

‡ Tiele, *Outlines of the History of the Ancient Religions to the Spread of the Universal Religions*, 65 (edn. Lond. 1880); Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, i. 120 (edn. Berlin, 1869). This practice was abolished by Muḥammad; see Sûra lxxxi (TAKWÎR) 8.

§ De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 321.

my intellect was yet weak; but now I worship the Merciful as my Lord; in order that He, the Lord of forgiveness, might pardon my sins. Observe piety to God, your Lord! As long as you fear God you will not be lost! Do ye observe the good? Their abodes are the gardens of Paradise, while the wicked will be condemned to fire. They do not prosper in life; and when they die they will have a fate that will contract their hearts.'

Zaid intended to leave Makka, and to go in search of the orthodox faith of Abraham; but Khattâb, who was his uncle and half-brother (they having both had the same mother), had given directions to Zaid's wife, Saffa, to acquaint him that he might be preparing for a journey: and he detained him. Zaid made, on this occasion, a *qasida*, or elegiac poem,\* which begins—'Was I afraid of humiliation, etc.' When Zaid came to the Ka'ba, he went into the Mosque and said—'I am truly at Thy service, for I am Thy slave. I do what Abraham did. He was standing when he said—I incline myself till my nose touches the ground. Whatever Thou mayest impose upon me, I will do. Virtue is lasting, but not pride. He who travels during the heat of the day is not like unto him who sleeps during that time.' He used also to say—'I submit' (here occurs the word *Islâm*) 'to Him to whom the earth submits.† It carries heavy rocks, and God has expanded it. And when He had seen it He placed the earth in the water,‡ and made it firm by putting mountains upon it.§ I submit to Him whom the clouds obey, which carry sweet water.|| And if a cloud goes to any country,¶ it is by His orders; and it pours pails of water upon it.\*\*

To such an extent did Khattâb persecute Zaid that he drove him out from Makka, and appointed some young men of the fools of Makka to watch him, with injunctions not to allow him to

\* The *qasida* is a kind of longer *gazel* (or 'ode'),—the *gazel* seldom exceeding thirteen distichs, and never exceeding eighteen.

† See Sûra iii (ÂL'Î-IMRÂN) 8.

‡ See Sûra lvi (WAQIA') 68.

§ See Sûra xlvii (QATL) 30.

¶ See Sûra xxxv (MALÂIKA) 10.

§ See Sûra lxxxix (FAJR) 32.

\*\* See Sûra lxxx ('ABAS) 25.

return to the city. Zaid remained at Hira, which is above Makka; and he was not able to visit the city except by concealing his movements from his gaolers. If they obtained information they told Khattâb of it, who sent him back to Hira,\* and punished him. The Quraishites were afraid that their religion might be corrupted, and that others might follow his example.

Zaid went, after all, in search of 'the Faith of Abraham,' and inquired of the monks and rabbins regarding it. He travelled through Mosul and Mesopotamia. Then he proceeded to Syria, and wandered through the whole country. At length he came to a monk at Mayfa'at, in Balkâ, who was renowned for his knowledge of the Christian religion; and he asked him respecting the orthodox faith of Abraham. He answered—'Thou seekest a religion with which no one can acquaint thee just now. But stop! a prophet has arisen in the country from which thou comest, who has been sent with the true and orthodox faith of Abraham. He has been sent just at this time.' Zaid was acquainted with the tenets of the Jews and Christians; and as neither of them satisfied him, he started, immediately on hearing this, for Makka; but when he passed through the country of the Lakhmites, he was murdered by them.† Such, with some information introduced by us from other writers, is the translation given by Dr. Sprenger of the chapter from Ibn Is-hâq.

The examples of sceptics converted to Christianity, and of prophets who preceded Muḥammad in the Hijâz, might be multi-

\* This is the mountain to which Muḥammad was in the habit of retiring for religious purposes, and where he is said to have received the earlier revelations recorded in the Qur'ân. It is a steep ascent just outside Makka, and is mounted by stone steps. See, Bate, *The Holy Places of Makka* (a work that will appear shortly).

† Ibn Is-hâq, 56; Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 43. As to Ibn Is-hâq as an authority, see Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. lxxvii—cv; Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 72 (edn. Lond. 1874). It will be noted that nearly all the sayings of Zaid in this account are almost literal reproductions of the passages in the Qur'ân. The conclusion of the story, says Sprenger, is very suspicious. He adds that Ibn Is-hâq is wont to place a prediction or a miracle where there is something to be concealed.



plied. But what has been said will be sufficient to shew that the successful prophet of the Arabs, in founding a new religion, did nothing more than gather the floating elements which had been imported or originated by others in obedience to the irresistible force of the spirit of the time,—that spirit which carries in the beginning the elect, but in the end, all and anything, before itself.\*

Thus are sentences of the Qur'ân, and invocations in the exact expressions of that book, put by the traditionists into the lips of Zaid who lived long before a word of the Qur'ân was written. The discreditable nature of these narratives is, as Sprenger in his footnote just quoted says, palpable from their very style and contents. Still, says Muir, I am far from denying that Zaid's enquiries and doctrines may have constituted one of the causes which prompted Muḥammad to enquiry and religious thought. But whatever grounds may exist for regarding Zaid as a philosophical or a religious enquirer, one would only have smiled at the clumsiness of the structure erected by the traditionists on so slender a basis, had it not been that Sprenger appears himself to recognize that basis, and even builds thereon in part, as we have seen, his own theory,—namely, that Muḥammad 'did nothing more than gather the floating elements which had been already imported or originated by others;' and, instead of (as is commonly supposed) carrying Arabia along with him, was himself carried away 'by the irresistible force of the spirit of the time.' It follows from Sprenger's theory that Muḥammad was actually preceded by many of his followers in the discovery and adoption of the Islâmic faith. This would appear to have been also the view of the greatest of French students of Islâm, Mons. Caussin de Percival, who speaks of Zaid as 'this precursor of Mohammed.'†

Arabia, says Sir William Muir, was no doubt prepared for a

Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 39—44. Cnf. Shahrastâni, 437; Masa'ûdi, cap. 6.

† Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 321.

religious change. Judaism and Christianity had sown the seeds of divine knowledge in different parts of that continent; and many inquiring minds may have groped the way to the light of truth, and paved the way for Muḥammad's investigations and convictions. Disgusted, says Deutsch, with the fetichism into which their countrymen had sunk, the four men we have named (all of them relations of Muḥammad's) once met at the Ka'ba during the annual feast, and thus expressed their secret opinion to each other;—'Shall we encompass a stone which neither seeth nor heareth? Let us seek a better faith!'<sup>\*</sup> These men were not so much idolaters as Muḥammad was and taught his followers to be. But to none of these is the religion established by him directly attributable. Its distinctive peculiarities are all his own. He alone is responsible for its faults, and he alone is entitled to all the credit, whatever it may be, of being its sole founder. It is the workmanship of his wonderful mind, and it bears in every part the impress of his own strong individuality. In this view, such passages as the following are strangely mistaken, where Sprenger, after re-asserting in substance his theory already mentioned, says—'Islâm is not the work of Moham-mad,—it is not the doctrine of the Impostor. It embodies the faith and sentiments of men who, for their talents and virtues, must be considered as the most distinguished of their nation; and who under all circumstances acted in a manner so faithful to the spirit of the Arabs, that they must be regarded as the representatives of them. Islâm is therefore the offspring of the spirit of the time, and the voice of the Arabian nation.'†

Though such anticipations of Muḥammad are to be rejected, as altogether puerile, and though the manifest tendency to invent

<sup>\*</sup> Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, 95.

† Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. p. lxiix, ccxxxix—xli; Nöldeke, *De Origine et Compositione Qorani*, 15 (edn. Gottingen, 1856); Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans*, 14; Dozy, *Islamisme*, 14; Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 171, 174, and *Leben des Mohammed*, i. 83—88, 119, seqq.; Tiele, *The Universal Religions*, 102; Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 73-4.

legends of this description makes it difficult to sever the real from the fictitious in the matter of these four men, yet it may be admitted as highly probable that a spirit of religious enquiry, the disposition to reject idolatry, and a perception of the superiority of Judaism and Christianity, did in some quarters about this time exist.\* With such persons Muḥammad would no doubt deeply sympathize, and would hold converse with them on the gross idolatry of their race and the need of a more spiritual faith for their regeneration.† It is remarkable that with all the facts of history before him, so learned a man as Sayyid Ahmad Khān should assert that the coming of Muḥammad was 'sudden and unexpected.'‡ If such an assertion had been made by a Christian or a Jew, it would have been cited by some zealous believer in Muḥammad as additional evidence, in the teeth of all history, of religious prejudice and bitterness. (from Fox in *Annals*)

It has to be borne in mind that Islāmic tradition, such as it is, has arisen out of the exigencies of controversy. This circumstance must ever suggest a variety of the gravest misgivings as to the amount of credit properly attaching to it. The traditions of one party among Muhammadans have ever been strenuously discredited by some other party. Even Muslims themselves have often proclaimed 'war to the knife' to their own co-religionists in regard to this very matter of the credibility of the Islāmic traditions. Apart from the siding with Muḥammad of a few (a very few) renegades, who in many instances turned out to be as great a dishonour to the faith they adopted as they had been to the faiths they had abjured, no *bonâ-fide* annals recorded at the time can be cited in support of such a tradition. The impediment to the acceptance of such a tradition is, moreover, consider-

\* Cazenove, *Lectures on Mahometanism*, 47.

† Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, ii. 52. Osborn, *Islām under the Arabs*, 4, seqq.; Arnold, *Islām and Christianity*, 35-7; *The Christian Remembrancer* for January 1855, pp. 106-7; Macbride, *The Mohammedan Religion Explained*, 19, 20.

‡ Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Manners and Customs of the Pre-Islamic Arabs*, 13, 14.

ably enhanced when we remember the wide extent of empire over which Judaism and Christianity had extended prior to Muḥammad's day. Long before his time translations of the Scriptures in several different languages and dialects had become, more or less extensively circulated throughout many of the countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa, original manuscripts of which are still open to inspection in the great libraries of Europe. Now, in the days of Muḥammad it was not as much as known to many of the people of those countries that a person of that name existed. How, then, can it be shewn that those people, not being believers in him, rejected him in the manner above described? How can it be supposed that all the Jews and Christians residing in countries that were unknown or inimical to each other, could have combined together in the manner described by Muslims, and for such a purpose?

Of similar effect are the words in Sūra xxviii (QASAS) 52, 53, where we read,—

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَتَبَ مِن قَبْلِهِم بِهٖ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ وَإِذْ أَخْبَرْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِهِ  
فَالْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مِن قَبْلِهِ مُسْلِمِينَ ۝

‘Those to whom we gave the Scriptures which were before it (*i. e.* before the Qur’ân) believe in it; and when it is read unto them they say—We believe therein: it is certainly the truth from our Lord: verily, we were Muslims before!’

The meaning is that they recognized Muḥammad from descriptions given of him in the previous revelations. Now, according to the Qur’ân itself those revelations were none other than those we now have,—which, however, contain no allusions to Muḥammad. The Muslim infers that the Scriptures must have been corrupted: the Jew and the Christian infer that either the statement embodied in the text is a fabrication, or the persons represented as speaking thus, said what was not true.

Thus far we have taken into consideration those portions of the Qur'ân which are held by Muslims to contain direct evidence in favour of their dogma that Ishmael was 'the Child of Promise;' and we have added some samples of those traditions which in their opinion tell in the same direction. We think it must be manifest that the evidence, even at its best, fails to carry the point, and is hampered with ambiguities of a tendency most disastrous to the dogma which the Muslim wishes to establish.

We now proceed to shew that if we take the Qur'ân as our guide in this matter, the collateral or incidental evidence which it yields in regard to the subject is such that the Muslim puts the benefit of the ambiguity thus shewn to exist in its teachings, to the credit of the wrong side in the argument. That is to say, the support on which the Islâmic dogma in regard to the matter chiefly rests, proves to be unsound and insufficient. The Muslim, therefore, in continuing to maintain it, assumes a discord between the teachings of the Bible and the Qur'ân which cannot be shewn to exist. The proof of this will appear if we remember in the first place, that if the dogma is sound, it follows that Muḥammad authorizes the belief that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are corrupted; and in the second place, that the Qur'ân distinctly teaches that the Israelitish race is superior to the race of Ishmael.

It is a tenet universally held by Muslims that the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians have been corrupted and interpolated by them. This tenet is in fact essential to the very existence of Islâm. Strange as it may seem, it would be quite easy to prove that such a belief is in direct opposition to a large number of passages that might be cited from the Qur'ân.\* For the present we need quote no more than two. Thus, in Sûra xii (YÛSUF) III, we read,—

مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَىٰ ۚ وَلَٰكِن تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۝

\* See, Muir, *The Testimony borne by the Coran to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures*, passim (edn. Agra, 1856, Allahabad, 1860, Lond. 1878).

‘The Qur’ân is not a fabrication, but the attestation of that Revelation which was prior to it.’

Similarly, in Sûra v (MĀIDA) 72, the Divine Being is represented as directing Muḥammad thus,—

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسَنَّا عَلَىٰ نَبِيِّ ط حَتَّىٰ تَقِيمُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَلَا نَجْعَلْ مَا

أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهَا

‘Say thou—O ye People of the Book, ye are not grounded upon anything until ye observe the Taurât and the Injil, and that which hath been revealed unto you from your Lord.’\*

In these passages the author of the Qur’ân bears emphatic testimony to the authenticity and uncorruptness of the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians as extant in his time.

Now, the latest writer in the New Testament canon died about five centuries before the time when Muḥammad recorded these passages; and the canon of the Old Testament was closed about nine hundred years before his day. We submit, then, that these verses attest the genuineness and authenticity of those Books as they existed in Muḥammad’s own time. If they do not, the burden of proof rests with those which deny it, and yet declare themselves believers in the Qur’ân: if they do, the followers of Muḥammad are bound to admit in evidence the Books referred to. Be it borne in mind that the testimony thus adduced is taken from that quarter to which every true Muslim is pledged to attach the highest possible value. Clearly, then, he cannot hold his present dogma in regard to Ishmael unless he is prepared to deny the teaching of the Qur’ân as to the authority and uncorruptness of the Scriptures. The only supposition on which he can maintain such a view is that the Qur’ân—so far from ‘confirming,’ as it professes to do, the Taurât and the Gospel, and ‘attesting” their origin and their value—implugns

\* The allusion in the last clause is to the Qur’ân. The Taurât is the Pentateuch; the Injil (Grk. *εὐαγγέλιον*, through Lat. *Evangelium*) is the Gospel.

their accuracy and their trustworthiness. If, therefore, the dogma of Muslims in regard to Ishmael be the correct one, not only is the Bible untrue, but Muḥammad and the Qur'ān are likewise untrue!

If Muslims can prove either that the inspired records of the Jews have been tampered with, or that the writer of the Book of GENESIS was guilty of misstatement in regard to the narrative concerning these two sons of the patriarch's, they clearly are entitled to the enjoyment of their victory. Failing this, it is equally clear that it is their duty to acknowledge the unsoundness of their position, and to abandon it.

That the disagreement which the Muḥammadan supposes to exist between the teachings of the Bible and the Qur'ān in regard to Ishmael and Isaac is a mere fancy of his own, will still further appear if we note what the Qur'ān teaches regarding the superiority of the Israelitish race when contrasted with the race of Ishmael.

Let us carefully note the teaching embodied in Sûra xxix ('ANQABÛT) 26, where we read,—

(وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النَّبِيَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ ۚ)

'And WE gave him Isaac and Jacob: and WE placed among his descendants the gift of prophecy and the Scriptures.'

The reader of the Qur'ān who is acquainted with the Bible must often be struck with the singularly loose way it has of mixing historical facts and jumbling up Scripture names regardless of chronological sequence and family relationship. A great number of passages might be instanced in proof of this;\* and it may be urged that the omission of the name of Ishmael here, shews merely that this verse is a case in point. We know not on what grounds such strange inadvertency can be vindicated in the case of a book designed by God to supersede the Sacred records of the Jews.

\* See, for example, the following places:—Sûra ii. 127; vi. 84; xii. 6; xix. 72; xxix. 38.

The only explanation we can suggest is the reputed inability of Muḥammad to read and write, so that he was dependent upon second hand both for his historical facts and also for the transmission of his words to writing. The Muḥammadan, however, believes that the author of the Qur'ân was not a fallible man, but the omniscient God,—that it was written by Him from all eternity and preserved in heaven under infallible guardianship, and that it consequently contains no error.\* It is therefore but poor consolation which the Christian apologist of Islâm gives the Muḥammadan when he charitably discovers palliation for slips which imply that Muḥammad was by reason of his want of education cut off from the usual sources of information.

To turn, however, to our verse. The context shews that the person here alluded to as he to whom Isaac and Jacob were 'given' is Abraham. There are other passages also where the same fact is mentioned. There are two points in this verse which call for notice,—the trust committed by God to the posterity of Abraham, and the omission of all mention of Ishmael. Muslims contend that Muḥammad held and taught that the eldest son of Abraham was 'the Child of Promise.' Whether he did or no, it is nowhere taught in the Qur'ân. No dispassionate person reading this verse would get the impression that the posterity of Abraham here mentioned was his posterity through Ishmael. If the author of the Qur'ân really held the dogma that the descendants of Ishmael were the chosen race through whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed, is it not worthy of remark that in a passage of such import as this one is, he should have been so strangely silent concerning so important a point? He even goes out of his way to embody in the text a sentiment that must produce in any unprejudiced mind an impression quite contrary to such a supposition.

Secondly, let it be noted that the blessings referred to in this verse are spiritual ones,—'the gift of prophecy and the Scriptures.' What trust could be more momentous and more sacred! The

\* Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 46, 48, 74, and *Al Koran*, 397.



Qur'an in various places represents the Almighty as alluding to the Jewish nation in terms of complacency and laudation. Thus, in Sûra ii (BAQR) 46, we read,—

يٰۤاَيُّهَا اِسْرٰٓءِیْل اٰذْكُرُوْا اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَیْكَمۡ وَ اَنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ عَلٰی الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ۝

'O Children of Israel, remember My favour wherewith I have favoured you, and (remember) that I have favoured you above all nations!'

The same sentiment is of frequent occurrence in the other earlier Madîna Sûras. And while even Muslims themselves will admit that all the great prophets who had appeared before the days of Muhammad were of the race of Isaac and Jacob, it is impossible for them to shew that the race of Ishmael was ever so far an object of the Divine favour as to give birth to even one such Heaven-sent messenger. Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Christ, were all of them persons the divine origin of whose commission Muhammadans admit; they were all of them persons in whom, whether by means of their deeds or by means of their teachings, the Divine element was conspicuous to all men; and they were all of them *of the seed of Isaac*. But what became of the descendants of Ishmael during all the ages during which the above-named personages were known for their teachings and for the wonders that were wrought by them? There is, in truth, no answer but this, that during all those long ages the descendants of Ishmael were given over to the grossest fetichism, the most benighted superstition, and the most heartless and diabolical barbarism and cruelty. There was among them neither prophecy, nor miracle, nor interpretation of dreams. They were a pagan nation, sunk in idolatry,—making for themselves gods with their own hands, and then becoming subject to them. And in entire keeping with this we find that the only miracles which are recorded even in the Qur'an itself, are such as were wrought, not by descendants of Ishmael, but by descendants of Isaac,—through whose seed the promises made to Abraham were

in fact fulfilled. Surely if miracles had been wrought and prophecies uttered by any of the descendants of Ishmael, the author of the Qur'ân would not have failed to accord the circumstance some notice; nor would he, as the chief of all the inspired prophets, have been unaware of it. There is not, however, throughout the whole Qur'ân, as much as a single trace of an allusion to any such proof of the Divine presence and guidance.)

And is not the *manner* of the allusion which Muḥammad makes in this verse to the descendants of Abraham well calculated to suggest enquiry in the mind of any thoughtful Muslim? If indeed he had intended it to be held by his followers, as one of the chief corner-stones of their faith, that not merely was Ishmael the eldest of the patriarch's children, but also the child specially announced to him by the angel as the son of his old age, and the child through whom the promised Deliverer was to be born, it is simply unaccountable that he should in this passage have overlooked him, and made special reference to a son and even to a grandson whose progeny was, according to the Muslim dogma, to cut a quite subordinate and even unenviable figure in the future history of the world as compared with the progeny of that son who was first not only in point of birth but also in point of ecclesiastical importance and rank. If the Muslim regarded the Qur'ân as an inspired book written by an erring fellow-man, he would be manageable, and there would be some chance of his difficulty being mitigated; but believing it, as he does, to have been written as it now stands from all eternity,\* he is morally bound to admit that the conclusion deduced from the text, taken according to the proper and natural meaning of its terms, has

*unavoidably* The phrase is continually on the lips of Muḥammadans, who seem quite insensible to the contradiction it involves. It is only charitable to suppose that it may be but an instance of that passion for hyperbole and antiquity which everywhere characterizes the Oriental mind,—the idea being that the event dates from a period altogether transcending human conception. This charitable supposition, however, the average Muḥammadan would reject as a suggestion of Hell-born infidelity. But the more philosophical of them understand it to mean that the Qur'ân has always existed in the very essence of God. A

the sanction of the Divine Being Himself whom the Muslim believes to have made the promise. ✕

The verse clearly proves the spiritual precedence and superiority of that branch of the Abrahamic race which descended through Isaac over that which descended through Ishmael. It also proves with equal clearness that in the opinion of Muḥammad the custody of the Inspired records, as also the gift of prophecy—regarded as a token of the Divine favour, preference, and inspiration—was confined to the Israelitish race to the complete exclusion of the race of Ishmael. Nor can it be said that we have based the argument on a single and isolated passage, for the same teaching is embodied in a large number of other passages.

But even supposing it were not so,—supposing the testimony of the Qur'ān in regard to the matter were so plain and clear as to admit of no two opinions as to what it was that Muḥammad himself intended to teach,—the case does not amount to one of discrepancy in Divinely-inspired statements. ✕ For whatever opinion may be held as to the nature and extent of Muḥammad's inspiration, a dispassionate comparison of the historical element in the Qur'ān with that in the Bible will shew that in regard to matters of fact the statements of that book cannot be accepted. ✕ It is evident throughout the Qur'ān, that if we are to receive as fact the historical statements of the book, we must hold ourselves in readiness to impale our common sense at almost every step, for no wilder statements were ever put forth than those which that book contains,—not even by avowed writers of fiction. The charm of a perfect writer of fiction is mainly in that near approach to fact and probability which invests his visions with an air of reality. But the author of the Qur'ān seems to have made an effort to go out of his way to turn the sober statements of Scripture history into such a jumble of contradictions and improbabilities as no man of understanding could for an instant accept. ✕ In

\* This fact has been well pointed out by Thomas Carlyle in his famous Essay on Hero-worship.

the ordinary affairs of life Muslims are not wanting in that sagacity and circumspection which fall to the lot of other members of the human race; but in the realm of religion there is one maxim which is all-pervading and ever-present in every true Muslim,—*Credo quia absurdum*, 'I believe the thing because it is absurd.' We do not see that there is any necessity for charging Muḥammad with falsehood in order to account for this;—the fact is sufficiently accounted for by the circumstance that being himself unable to read, he accepted in common with his fellow-countrymen those legendary scraps of history that were current in his time.\* However much the statements of the Qur'ān regarding matters of historical fact may differ from those of the Bible, there is no evidence that they differed from the garbled traditions which found acceptance among the illiterate and benighted inhabitants of pre-Islāmite Arabia. †

From all that has been thus far advanced it will be perceived that in attributing, as Muḥammadans do, the dogma now under consideration to the teachings of the Qur'ān, they are very much in the position of a man who reckons without his host. We have here, however, only one instance out of many that could be adduced, of the cruel dilemmas in which Muḥammad—by reason, apparently, of his well-known inexactness and illiterateness—fixes his adherents. The strange and awkward point is that the Qur'ān says just enough to render it as impossible for the Muḥammadan to affirm that Ishmael was the child in question as for the Jew to deny it. One passage attests that Abraham's vow must necessarily have had reference to the son on whose promised birth he had been congratulated by the angel; and this was unquestionably Isaac: while another passage, taken in connexion with its context, does undoubtedly appear to favour the popular Muḥammadan view. A very rare state of things is this, and one which to a man who believes the Qur'ān to be a special revelation from God, ought to be startling.† If Muslims are to be

\* Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 101.

† Price, *Essay on Arabia*, 67.

believed, the views of the author of the Qur'ân in favour of Ishmael to the exclusion of Isaac were of the most pronounced sort.

Yet the only evidence they can produce from what they deem the highest quarter is the verse from Sûra'e-SAFFÂT already cited. What that is worth for their case we have seen. Strangely out of keeping with their opinion too, are the passages from the Madîna Sûras just cited. And equally so, and of similarly damaging effect, is the following passage from Sûra vii (A'RÂF) 140, where Moses is represented as saying to the Children of Israel,—

قَالَ أَغِيرَ اللَّهُ أَبْغِيكُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

'Shall I seek for you any other god than Jehovah, seeing that it is He who hath preferred you to the rest of the world?'

Whether Moses ever said anything of the sort is a point concerning which the Jewish records are silent. According to those records he was more in the habit of chiding the Israelites than of flattering them. With the historical accuracy of the fact, however, we have at present nothing to do; our concern is with the evidence the passage yields regarding the superiority of the race of Isaac to that of Ishmael. Evident as it is from these passages that until the time of Muḥammad at least, God looked with less favour on the Ishmaelites than on the Jews, this is a point on which the author of the Qur'ân seems to have been not quite clear in his own mind, for in Sûra iii (ÂL'I-IMRÂN) 110 he addresses his Arabian fellow-countrymen in the following fulsome terms,—

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ ۝

('Ye are the best nation that God hath raised up unto mankind!')

It does not say much for the judgment of the author that he should have had recourse to such very broad adulation. He professed to hold a Divine commission to abolish idol-worship; and seeing that this offence had been abolished from among the descendants of Isaac, the truth of the assertion is hard to find.

If the exceptional degree of excellence implied in the language were really theirs, still it is language which no wise and devout religious reformer would put before his followers. And that it should have been uttered by the supercessor of all the inspired prophets, does not stand to reason. It is one of the most notorious facts of history that the Arabians were a race wholly given to idolatry and all its concomitant vices. There surely could be no impropriety in a Muslim's inquiring what evidence was ever afforded in the history of the Arabian people prior to Muḥammad which could justify the use of such language. Evidence of God's special favour towards the race of Isaac is, as we have shewn, forthcoming in abundance in the pages of the Qur'ān. The case of a better and more highly favoured people still than they, ought not to be difficult of proof. So far from God's cherishing towards the Arabians those feelings of admiration and complacency implied in such language, we learn that the crime of image-worship was so abhorrent in His sight that He on many different occasions revealed His signal displeasure towards the Jews on account of this very crime.\* Religiously considered the Arabians were a singularly benighted people. In their own literature they are called *Ummī*, (*lit.* 'appertaining to a mother;' i.e. as their mothers bore them; hence,) in one's natural state, uninstructed, ignorant, illiterate. 'Eā detenti ignorantia,' says Dr. Pocock, '*quā ex utero matris prodibant, nec scribendi nec computandi artem edocti.*'† The term was a regular technical expression among the Arabs, and is applied to them both in a social and religious sense in reference to their wild and benighted condition. It was hence applied to them by the Jews to indicate that they were a people to whom no Divine revelation had been vouchsafed; in other words, that they were 'heathen,' or 'Gentiles,' in the technical

\* Brinckman, *Notes on Islām*, 70 (edn. Lond. 1868).

† Pocock, *Specimen*, 161-2; Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, 114; Macbride, *The Mohammadan Religion Explained*, 21; Lane, *Arabic Lexicon*, p. 92, col. 1; Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 101-2; Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Holy Koran*, p. 2; Mon. Williams, *Indian Wisdom*, Pref. xli-ii; Syed Ameer Ali, *Life of Mohammad*, 73.

sense. In the present instance, therefore, Muḥammad was administering to them a piece of overdone flattery. The self-satisfaction implied in such language is such as is well known to be characteristic of ignorant persons all the world over.

Of a similar tendency are those other pieces of egotistical flattery which we find in Sūra ii (BAQR) 130—133, where we read,—

وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مِنْ سَفَاةٍ نَفْسٍ ط وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا  
وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلَمْ قَالَ أَسَلَّمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝  
وَصَيَّ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبَ ط يَبْنِي إِنْ أَلَّهِ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَ

Who will be averse to the religion of Abraham but he whose mind is infatuated? Surely we have chosen him in this world, and in that which is to come he shall be one of the righteous. When his Lord said unto him—Resign thyself! he answered—To the Lord of all creatures have I resigned myself. And Abraham bequeathed this to his children, and (so did) Jacob (saying),—My children, verily God hath chosen this religion for you: therefore die not unless ye also become Musalmāns!

Similarly in Sūra iii (ĀL'-'IMRĀN) 66 we are brought acquainted with the interesting fact that,—

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا ط

‘Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian; he was of the true religion,—a Musalmān!’

The same spirit of fulsome adulation and vain-glory is found again in Sūra xxii (HĀJJ) 79, where Muḥammad administers to true believers’ the following exhortation,—

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ط هُوَ جِتَبَكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ  
 مِنْ حَرْجٍ ط مِلَّةَ آبَائِكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ط هُوَ سَمَّكَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ٥

*al-ua)* 'Fight ye in defence of God's true religion, as it behoveth to fight for the same. He hath chosen you, and hath not imposed on you any difficulty in the religion (He hath given you),—the religion of your father Abraham. He called you Musalmâns before.'

The commentators interpret that the religion to which so much importance is here attached is that taught by Muḥammad as distinguished from that believed in by Jews and by Christians. It was an essential point in the teaching of Muḥammad that the Musalmân faith was the creed held and observed by Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and their posterity. Nor was the 'true religion' thus spoken of the religion of 'resignation' merely, as the term 'Musalmân' implies; for Muḥammadans hold that it was also the acceptance of that formula which Gibbon affirms embodies 'an eternal truth and a necessary fiction'—*viz.* 'THERE IS NO DEITY BUT ALLÂH, AND MUHAMMAD IS THE MESSENGER OF ALLÂH!' In other words, the apostles, prophets, and patriarchs of the former times, together with all their true and faithful followers, were believers by anticipation in that creed which was now offered by Muḥammad to the illiterate Arabs. Abraham, and even Christ Himself, were Musalmâns! The conclusion which charity suggests in regard to such an affirmation is that he was unacquainted with the historical facts. How far a person so misdirected in regard to facts that are patent to all men may be relied upon to guide his fellow-men safely into the great mystery of The Unknown, it must be left to those who trust to his guidance to inform us.

Lastly.—We are well aware that Muḥammadans are wont to cite passages in favour of their dogma from their traditionary literature. We have, however, carefully abstained from attaching conclusive weight to passages that might be cited from that



quarter; partly because Muslims themselves are as far as possible from being agreed as to the authority properly attaching to it, and partly because, making all due allowance for difference of interpretation of the text, the Qur'ân is the only book to which, almost without exception, they appeal as to ultimate and decisive authority.\* Our purpose has been to shew that concerning the dogma now under consideration, the Qur'ân at least knows nothing. We have also striven to shew that whatever may be said by Muslims as to Muḥammad's private opinion in regard to the matter, the evidence of the 'eternal' and 'uncreated' book is clearly unfavourable to the dogma so generally received by the adherents of Islâm.

Thus much for the evidence of the Qur'ân. Even if it be agreed on all hands, among both the adherents of Islâm and its non-adherents, that the passage teaches that Ishmael was the son commanded to be offered, the Muḥammadan has still to account for the fact that the author of the Qur'ân says nothing in reference to that 'blessing' which was to accrue to all mankind through the son in question. Muslims have been wont to choose their own man in this case, and then coolly take as proven all that follows upon such an assumption,—transferring to him and his posterity those prophecies which the Bible attaches to another person, and getting out of the difficulty by roundly asserting that long before the birth of Muḥammad, Jews and Christians mutilated the text of GENESIS for purposes of their own, and thus excluded from that document all mention of him. But even though the Qur'ân expressly applied the promises and predictions to Ishmael by name, there would yet remain the question as to the Divine authority of the respective books,—the Qur'ân and the Bible. The subject is not a Christian one merely; it is of equal concern to Christians and to Jews: and the apologist of Islâm who would

\* The objection of the Shī'as to the Qur'ân is not that it is corrupt, but that it is incomplete.

get out of the difficulty by the time-honoured ascription of 'bigotry' and 'bias' and similar attributes, should remember that his language is opposed to the beliefs not of the followers of Jesus alone, but also of the followers of Moses. The Muhammadan will contend that every Jew and Christian is *ipso facto* incapable of estimating aright the merits of the argument. But he does not see that this same assertion applies in exactly the same way to himself. In either instance, it is the case of men being arbiters in their own suit. The assertion, therefore, is but a 'man of straw,' though it is sufficiently plausible to entrap the unwary into misplaced sympathy. It is evident that, exceptions aside, the most suitable persons to engage in the controversy are the trained theologians of the three sides,—the Jewish, the Christian, and the Muslim: else, as well might a physician be expected, in a matter of which a practised physician alone could be considered qualified to judge, to abide by the verdict of an architect. The thing that makes it so hard for the Muslim to admit the Jewish and Christian interpretation of the matter, is that the Israelite and the Ishmaelite are representative men,—they represent principles; or what is nearer the fact, they represent opposing attitudes in reference to a certain eternal verity, and their respective characters are typical. The eternal verity is that symbolized by the principle of separation which God set up in the family of Abraham. 'He that was born of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. These things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants.' The one child is in the covenant, and the other out of it; the one represents the unbelieving world, and the other the Church of God. 'As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.' The jealousy of the boy Ishmael in regard to the Child of Promise is but typical of the aversion of the men of the world for the men of faith, and of the contempt and hostility they cherish towards them.

Let us now take note of certain facts of history which Muslims are wont to quote as corroborative of their view in relation to this subject. We will examine, in the first place, the historical value of their opinion as to the connexion of Abraham and Ishmael with Makka; and in the second place, we will examine their dogma regarding the pedigree of Muhammad.

Islamic legends teach that when Abraham, in obedience to Divine command, sent away Hagar and her son, the homeless outcasts wandered as far as the territory of Makka, where Jehovah caused the fountain of ZAMZAM to spring forth for their relief.\* A number of traditions of various kinds in relation to the matter have gained currency among Muslims. One of them tells us that when Hagar and her son reached Makka, the anxious mother placed her child on the ground while she went to seek for water to quench their thirst. Seven times did she run about between the little hills Safâ and Marwa,—now pausing to examine the soil for indications of water, and now in intense solicitude rushing hurriedly about again. At this point the legends shew some divergence. One of them relates that while Hagar was away, her parched child began to kick about him, as he lay, in a childish passion, when on a sudden and by miracle, water sprang forth from the ground at his feet.† Another legend relates that at the command of God the angel Gabriel interposed at this crisis on behalf of the poor outcasts, and himself digging the Well, supplied them with water of such miraculous quality that it not only quenched their thirst, but served also to remove their hunger. The legends go on to relate how the Jurhumites, who were the masters of the Hijâz, on witnessing the miracle by which water was supplied to the forlorn refugees, permitted them to settle among them. In course of time Ishmael attained to manhood and became married to an Egyptian wife,—whom,

\* Herklots, *Qânûn-i-Islâm*, 64; Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 178.

† Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. xcii.

however, he eventually divorced, and took to himself Ra'la,\* a daughter of Muzâz, the twelfth of the Jurhumite kings.† Lastly, some legends have it that the birth-place of Ishmael was not at the home of Abraham in Hebron, but in the valley Mina, about three miles east of Makka; and Burckhardt in his sketch of the Valley points out the site of the birth-place.‡ It is a small cavern capable of holding four or five persons.§ *cave* (

Such are some specimens of the traditions relating to the origin of the now famous Well at Makka. Under the influence of such traditions as these, the Well has become invested with a peculiar sacredness in the estimation of the Ishmaelitic races.

But the tale of wonder does not end here. Not only are Hagar and her son thus miraculously associated with the Sacred City,—the connexion with it of the great patriarch himself is no less wonderful. There, we are told, he built an altar unto God; and in conjunction with Ishmael, he re-erected the Ka'ba for the first time since its demolition on the occasion of the Deluge.|| Very different opinions, however, are held among Muslims, as to the manner of his connexion with the city,—whether he really held permanent residence there, or whether he merely went thither as an occasional visitor at the house of Ishmael. Some of the traditionists are of opinion that he actually resided there with his son, and that they together built the Ka'ba during the period of his sojourn there. Others of them hold that only Ishmael resided there, and that his father visited the spot by a series of miraculous pilgrimages. According to the latter opinion the great patriarch was wont to leave his home in Hebron every morning, and flying miraculously through the air on a certain

\* Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 55.

† His name in full was Muzâz bin 'Amr. According to Kalbi, however, Ra'la was the daughter of Yashjob bin Ya'rob bin Ludzen bin Jurhum bin 'Amr bin Saba. For an account of the Amalekites and Jurhumites, see Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 13.

‡ Burckhardt, *Arabia*, ii. 64.

§ Bate, *The Holy Places of Makka*.

|| Bate, *The Origin and History of the Ka'ba*.

winged animal of the donkey species (Arab. *burāq* = Pegasus) was required by Sarah to be at his home again by noon,—having in the meantime performed a day's work at the Ka'ba.\* These rapid movements were necessitated by reason of Sarah's jealousy of Hagar.

Such is a very brief epitome of the opinions held by Muslims in regard to this matter. It will not be difficult to shew that the traditions on which these opinions are based are destitute of adequate support.

That we may have before us the only materials extant upon which reliance may be placed, we will cite in full the narrative as contained in the most ancient Jewish records in relation to the subject. It may be well to keep distinct the two departures of Hagar from Abraham's abode.

i. Her first departure occurred before the birth of Ishmael, and is thus narrated.

GEN. xvi.—'Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children. And she had a handmaid,—an Egyptian whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram—Behold, now, Jehovah hath restrained me from bearing. I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her.† And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And when Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai his wife took Hagar her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram—My wrong (be) upon thee! I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes:—the Lord judge between me and thee! But Abram said unto Sarai—Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to

\* Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 55, 127.

† The practice was apparently common, as no expression of surprise accompanies the request; and this place, as also ch. xxx. 3, shews that even the households of the patriarchs were not free from it: none the less is the practice wrong and mischievous, as is abundantly evident in the miseries which it introduced into the patriarch's home and family,—a sufficiently clear proof that God regarded it with disapproval.—*The Annotated Paragraph Bible*, R. T. S.

her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her. And the angel of the Lord\* found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness,—by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said—Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said—I flee from the face of my mistress, Sarai. And the angel of the Lord said unto her—Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself to her! And the angel of the Lord said (further) unto her—I will multiply thy seed exceedingly; so much so, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said (again) unto her—Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name ISHMAEL,† for the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man,—his hand against every man and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.‡ And she called the name of the Lord who spake unto her *Elroi*,§ for she said—Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?|| Wherefore the well was called BEERLAHAIROI,¶ behold it is between Kadesh and

\* 'The angel of the Lord:—This expression is of frequent occurrence in the Bible. It signifies any agent or messenger sent from God,—whether a human creature, or a being of a higher or celestial order, or even a Providential dispensation. In the present passage the genitive is the Genitive of Apposition; so that the phrase signifies 'the Jehovah-angel' (*lit.* 'the Angel [of] Jehovah,' *i.e.* 'the Angel Jehovah'): in other words, the Angel was the Lord Himself in human form.—*The Paragraph Bible* R. T. S. Chf. ch. xxii. 15, 16; EXOD. iii. 2–14, and xviii. 20, 21.

† *Lit.* 'Whom God hears,' or 'heard of God,' or 'God will hear.'

‡ Some Muhammadan writers are of opinion that the person foretold in this and the foregoing verse was no other than Muhammad himself! See Martyn's *Controversial Tracts*, 271.

§ *Lit.* 'Thou, O God, seest me.'

|| 'Have I also here;'—Which may mean—Have I here also, away though I am from Abram's tent, beheld Him that appeared to me.'

¶ *Lit.* 'The well of Him who liveth and seeth me.' According to Kalisch the translation given of this word in the English Bible is very wide of the mark. His explanation is so suggestive that we give it in its entirety. "The confidence and the distinctness with which the assurances were expressed were to Hagar a convincing proof that they had been uttered by a superhuman being. The misery to which her flight had exposed her had proved a school of correction for her over-bearing character, and she confided in the promises she had just received. Joy and fear, trembling and gratitude, struggled in her heart. She believed she had seen that eternal Being whom, according to a general notion of antiquity, no mortal can behold without forfeiting his life; yet not only was she uninjured, she had also received the pledge that she should

Bered. And Hagar bare Abram a son. And Abram called the name of his son whom Hagar bare, Ishmael. Now, Abram was fourscore and six years old when Hagar bare him Ishmael.\*

ii. The account of Hagar's second departure, in company with her son, is related as follows,—the change in the names of the patriarchal pair having in the meantime been effected by Divine authority.

GEN. xxi.—‘And Jehovah visited Sarah, as He had said;† and did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of the son whom Sarah bare to him, ISAAC. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said—God hath made me laugh; all who hear will laugh with me! And she said—Who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah should give children suck?—for I have borne him a son in his old age! And the child grew, and was weaned;‡ and Abraham made a great feast on the day when Isaac was weaned.

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham—Cast out this bondwoman with her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son. And God

become the parent of mighty tribes. She exclaimed, therefore, with mingled feelings of exultation and submission,—‘Thou art the God of seeing; for she said—Do I even still see (or live) after seeing (Him)?’ In other words—‘Thou art to me a God, whom I saw with impunity; for, although I saw Thee, I still live and see the light of day.’ The angel proves to be God Himself,—a case of not unfrequent occurrence (EXOD. iii. 4). The fountain at which this vision of God took place was therefore called—The well of seeing (God) and living.”—Kalisch, *Genesis*, 245. Cnf. EXOD. xxx. 20 (JOHN i. 18; 1 TIM. i. 16; HEB. i. 1—3). ✓

\* See a good paper in the *Christian Remembrancer* for January 1855, p. 95. See also Smith, *The Student's Old Testament History*, 54 (edn. Lond. 1865). For the Muhammadan view of this passage, see Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 269 seqq., and 432.

† ‘As He had said;’—And thus gave a pledge of the fulfilment of those other promises which required longer time for their accomplishment. ➤

‡ ‘Was weaned;’—Probably when he was three years old. ✓

said unto Abraham—Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of thy bondwoman. In all that Sarah hath said unto thee hearken unto her voice; for, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And of the son of the bondwoman also will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. (And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water—putting them on her shoulder—and the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle; and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went and sat her down over against him, a good way off,—as it were a bow-shot: for she said—Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the cry of the lad: and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said unto her—What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God hath heard the cry of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water: and she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad:\* and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer; and he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran:† and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.‡

Such are the accounts—Muslim and Jewish respectively—of the matter which we are now considering. The reader will not fail to note how strikingly the natural simplicity of the one account contrasts with the non-natural embellishment and straining after effect which are so apparent in the other. It is not enough to say by way of accounting for the artificial and obviously fabricated nature of the Muslim account, that such is the manner of oriental writers, for the writer of the Jewish account was also

\* 'God was with the lad;'—That is, God protected and prospered him, and did not lose sight of the promises He had made concerning him. ↗

† 'Paran:'—This, as we shall presently see, is the name of a district between Egypt and Edom, and extending from Beersheba nearly to Sinai, which is still inhabited by wandering tribes of Arabs, who boast their descent from Ishmael and retain still the customs of the patriarchs.

‡ Smith, *Old Testament History*, 61; Robinson, *Scripture Characters*, i. 86, seqq. (edn. Lond. 1822).



an Oriental. Why the one account should be a sober, rational, and common-sense statement, and the other an account which no man could for a moment accept unless he were carried away by a spirit of unreasoning credulity, must therefore be explained on some other theory. The avidity with which Muḥammadans seize on every mention of a 'well' in the Scripture narrative is quite a psychological curiosity. They leap at a single bound over geographical difficulties of the most stupendous description with the same lightheartedness with which they bridge over in the most imaginative fashion a gulf of many hundreds of years without any sound chronological data. They jumble up, interchange, and alter names, places, and dates, as if these things had nothing to do with genuine history. According to them, the 'fountain on the way to Shur' mentioned in the narrative of Hagar's first departure when her son was yet unborn and which she named Lahai-roi, is identical with the one she found when many years afterwards she 'wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba,' and both of these are none other than the well Zamzam at Makka!\*. The only evidence they can adduce in favour of such an opinion is in the following verse of the Qur'ān—viz. Sŭra xiv (IBRĀHĪM) 40, where Abraham is represented as saying,—

(وَبَنَّا إِبْرَاهِيمَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ ۝)

('O Lord, I have caused (some) of my offspring to settle in an unfruitful valley, near Thy holy house.')

The 'holy house' here referred to is the Ka'ba; and Muslims base upon the passage their rejection of the Scripture narrative and their belief that Makka was the place to which Ishmael and his mother journeyed on their removal from the household of Abraham.† An examination, however, of the historical and geographical allusions in the passages just quoted from GENESIS, as also of the chronological order of the events to which they refer,

\* See the note by Dr. Samuel Lee on p. 279 of his edition of Henry Martyn's *Controversial Tracts*.

† Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, Pref. xlviii.

will reveal how weak the Islāmic dogma in relation to the subject really is. We shall see that the opinion that either Ishmael or Abraham ever visited Makka finds no support in the only trustworthy history that can be quoted, and is, on the contrary, opposed to the evidence of that history.

The first locality in which we find Hagar and her son after their departure from the patriarchal home at Hebron is in 'the wilderness of Beersheba'—GEN. xxi. 14. Here, it would seem, the outcast wanderers took up their abode; for in *ver.* 20 we are told that 'Ishmael grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.' In the following verse the place of his abode is specified;—it was 'the wilderness of Paran.'\* And we are told that his mother at length obtained for him, as might naturally have been anticipated, a wife from among her own people, the Egyptians.† From that time till the time when he assisted at the interment of his father (GEN. xxv. 9), more than a half-a-century afterwards, we get no further mention of him. The reason obviously is that he was practically cut off from that branch of the family with which the Scripture narrative is mainly concerned. In *ver.* 18 of that chapter we find the following important record;—'And they'—*i. e.* Ishmael and his family—'dwelt from Havilah unto Shur which is before Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria. And he died in the presence of all his brethren.' Thus, living and dying, he was in proximity to his own people. If the words are to be taken literally, and if Makka was the place, the Muslim will have to shew that not only did Ishmael reside in Makka, but also that the other sons of Abraham resided there too. It surely is sufficient, however, that we are thus so expressly told that the country between Havilah and Shur, on the road from Palestine to Egypt, is the locality where Ishmael and his family dwelt, and where at length he died.

\* Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 270.

† Palgrave, *Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 455 (edn. Lond. 1865); Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, 20-21 (edn. Lond. 1830).

ready. The subject of the settlement of Ishmael has received such full and conclusive treatment by Forster as to leave nothing to be desired.\* Space forbids the reproduction here of his masterly investigation. The geographical difficulties which Muslims make so light of in connexion with this part of the subject are simply appalling. (~~admirable~~ *don't diminish*)

The efforts of the Muḥammadan doctors to remove a mountain are well exemplified in the controversy that has gathered round the word 'Paran.' The controversy, from their standpoint, is important not merely on account of the fact that 'the wilderness of Paran' became the abode of Ishmael, but also on account of the use they make of other Scripture statements that have reference to this place, for the purpose of finding in the Scriptures of the Jews, allusion to Muḥammad. A notable sample of such statements is given in DEUT. xxxiii. 2, where we read,—

*now* 'And he† said,—Jehovah came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them: He shined forth from mount Paran; and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went forth a fiery law for them.'

The great Persian Maulvi with whom the memorable 'Controversy' was carried on by Henry Martyn, renders the passage thus,—

'A light came from mount Sinai, and it shone upon us from mount Seir, and it was revealed to us from mount Paran.'‡

Elsewhere he renders it with differences which are such as do not inspire confidence in his fidelity,—

*now* 'God was revealed from Sinai: He shone forth from Seir: and imparted His bounty from Paran.'§ *given (admirable)*

The passage is confessedly difficult of interpretation. Muḥammadans understand it to mean, that there were to appear three great prophets—viz. Moses, Christ, and Muḥammad,—the first, from Sinai; the second, from Seir; and the third, from Paran,—

\* See his *Historical Geography of Arabia, and Mahometanism Unveiled*.

† 'He';—that is, Moses.

‡ Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, Pref. xlv.

§ Ibid. 278.

these three personages representing respectively Judaism, Christianity, and Islām.\* The different authorities express the matter somewhat differently: thus, Deutsch points out that in the Sifrah it is paraphrased thus,—“The Lord came from Sinai;’ that means—The Law was given in Hebrew: ‘and rose up from Seir unto them;’ that means that it (*sic*) was also given in Rûmî (*i. e.* Greek): ‘and He shined forth from mount Paran;’ that means in Arabic.”† There can be no doubt, says the Muḥammadan doctor already alluded to, that the passage relates to the missions of Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad;‡ ‘for, the place in which Moses saw the glory was mount Sinai, that (*sic*) of the mission of Jesus was Seir, that of Muḥammad the desert of Paran.’ “For it is well known,” says he, “that the passage ‘A light came from mount Sinai,’ alludes to the revelation received by Moses on that mountain; and that the passage ‘It shone upon us from mount Seir,’ alludes to the revelation received by the Messiah from mount Seir: for, by ‘Seir’ is meant Galilee, in a village of which, called Nazareth, the Messiah dwelt, whence his followers have been called *Nasāra*’ (sing. *Nasrān*) ‘Nazarenes.” He goes on,—As to the passage—‘It was revealed to us from mount Paran:’ the meaning is the revelation of Muḥammad received on mount Paran, which is a mountain in the neighbourhood of Makka, between which and Makka there is a journey of two days. He then secures, as he thinks, the last and the essential link of the chain of proof, by assuring us that ‘it is also well known that Abraham made Mecca the residence of Ishmael, and that Mohammed is descended from him,’§—thus taking in at an easy gulp all the genealogical and geographical difficulties of the controversy as if no such difficulties existed! Even so impartial and trusted a historian as Freeman declares the identification of Ishmael with

\* See Shahrastānī and Saff’u’d-dīn in Pocock, *Specimen*, 15, 183, 188, 189.

† Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, 66.

‡ Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 278.

§ Ibid. Pref. xlv.

Makka to be 'a bold stretch of geography.\* The Maulvi elsewhere affirms that "all the Jewish commentators agree that Paran and Mecca are the same place,—whether the word 'Paran' occur in The Law or elsewhere."† This sample of the acquaintance of this Muslim scholar with the statements of 'all the Jewish commentators' is thus summarily dealt with by Dr. Lee, whose immense learning in this department places him in a position almost unique,—'It is certain that *no* Jewish commentator whatever has said that Mecca and Paran are one and the same place.'‡

Thus much for the passage in DEUTERONOMY. Another passage in which this word 'Paran' occurs is very much utilized by Muḥammadan doctors—*viz.* HAB. iii. 3, where we read,—  
'God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens; and the earth was full of His praise.'

The same Maulvi renders this passage in a way that is intended to shew its allusion to Muḥammad: thus,—

'God shall come from the south, and the choice one from the Desert of Paran: his excellency shall continually cover the heavens; and his praise shall fill the earth.'§

Elsewhere he renders it in a way still less likely to meet the approval of the Hebraist;—'Again, the prophet Iiabakkuk has read,—

'Their book shall speak of that which God has brought for a revelation from mountain Paran, and the heavens shall be filled with the praise of Ahmed.'||

The words 'of Ahmed' have been inserted by this divine: they answer to nothing in the Hebrew.¶ In the former of these two

\* Freeman, *History and Conquests of the Saracens*, 26 (edn. Lond. 1876).

† Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 279.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

¶ Ibid. Pref. xlvii. In Muslim theology 'Ahmad' is the celestial name of Muḥammad, 'Muḥammad' his earthly name, and Maḥmūd his name in the infernal regions.—Hottinger, *Historia Orientalis*, 10; Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 142; Brückman, *Notes on Islām*, 40. See, on this whole subject, a forthcoming work of the present author entitled *Muḥammad as The Paraclete*.

¶ On this whole subject the reader will find much curious and learned information in Pusey's *Minor Prophets*, and Henderson's *Minor Prophets*; also in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. ARABIA.

renderings of his, he does not give the word 'Ahmed.' This verse is held by Muḥammadans to contain a prediction of the advent of Muḥammad. 'In the prophecy of Habakkuk,' says the Maulvī, 'who was one of the most illustrious of the Prophets, we have intimations, not only of the place in which the Prophet who had been promised should reside, but also of his character.'\*

As already intimated, the difficulty of applying the verse in DEUTERONOMY is admitted by all men who have laboured to understand it. The interpretation, however, which Muḥammadans put upon it is very much open to criticism. In the first place, Moſes did not 'come from' Sinai, nor Christ from Seir, nor Muḥammad from Paran. Their respective birthplaces were Egypt, Judæa, and Makka,—each of which places is unmistakably distinct from the localities mentioned in the text. Sinai and Paran are in Arabia Petraea (or Deserta), Seir is in Idumæa (Edom),† and Makka is in Arabia Felix (in the Hijâz). Again, Martyn's opponent writes,—'Every one knows that Makka was the residence of Ishmael:' and elsewhere,—'Ishmael resided in the Desert of Paran,—that is, Mecca.'‡ In reference to these astounding assumptions of the whole question at issue, Dr. Samuel Lee writes,—'Nothing can, I believe, be more certain than that Mecca is *not* situated in the Desert of Paran.'§ It has been well pointed out by Reland, that Paran was, in fact, the name of a city situated about 'three days' journey to the east of Elath,—which city gave its name to the district, and from which Makka is situated at a distance of at least five hundred miles to the south.|| This was also the opinion of Ptolemy.¶ Further, the reader scarcely needs to be reminded, that Galilee is in the north of

\* Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 279.

† Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* 449 (edn. Andover, 1829); Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cxiii.

‡ Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 271, 279.

§ Ibid. 271.

|| Reland, *Palestine*, ii. 556; Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 271, 279; Prideaux; *Life of Mahomet*, 93.

¶ Prideaux, *Life of Mahomet*, 93.

Palestine, and Seir in the south.\* Our Lord never even visited Seir, nor did Muḥammad ever visit Paran,—and even if it could be proved that he did, it would still be incumbent on the Muḥammadan to shew that his visit to the place was attended with events of such moment as to justify the conclusion which Muslims would wish to draw from it. However the case may be looked at, the geographical difficulties in the way of that interpretation which Muslims give to the passage, are insuperable.

The assertion made by Muslims that Muḥammad was the person referred to under the figure 'Jehovah shined forth from mount Paran,' is based upon a comparison of this passage with that in GEN. xxi. 21, where it is said that Ishmael, after taking leave of Abraham, 'dwelt in the wilderness of Paran.' Assuming, as they do, that Muḥammad was lineally descended from Ishmael,—an opinion of which we have no wish to deprive them, but one to the establishment of which there are, as we shall yet see, fatal objections,—they get over the geographical difficulty as to the distance between Paran and Makka in two ways:—Some of them assert that Muḥammad came from Paran *representatively*, inasmuch as he was of that nation of which Ishmael was the great ancestor; while others of them affirm that the writer of the Book of DEUTERONOMY made reference to a certain hill near Makka which happens now to bear the name of Paran or Fârân.

How this name came to be applied to that locality is thus told us by (Sayyid Ahmad Khân,—who certainly is the most able of all the apologists of Islâm whom the Muḥammadan community has yet given us.) He first connects the Auf mountains, which lie westward of the great territory of Najd, with Auf the father of Paran, whom he holds to be the grandson of Hîmyâr, the fourth in descent from Yuqtân (or Joktan) whom he considers identical with Qahtân.† Paran, he then proceeds, settled in the

\* Martyn, *Cont. over. Tracts*, 278.

† Syed Ahmed Khan, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 33; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cvii. Cnf. GEN. x. 21—30. To this question we shall have to revert at a later stage of our work.

neighbourhood where his father before him had lived, which the Maulvi affirms to be 'the plain wherein Holy Mecca now stands; and it was upon this account that the name of Pharan was given not only to the vast northern desert, extending as far as Kadesh, but also to the mountains therein situated. All Oriental historians,' he goes on, 'as well as every traditionist, confirms this fact, as do also the Scriptures, which *distinctly state* that the name of Paran was given to the locality in question.'\* We claim no acquaintance with the writings of 'all Oriental historians,' nor with those of 'every traditionist;' but if the learned Maulvi's statement here regarding them is as wide of the mark as his assertion regarding the testimony of the Scriptures on the point, he may rest assured that his opinion is not based on fact.† He elsewhere repeats this same statement in another form, with the addition that 'the wilderness of Paran is that widespread plain, extending from Syria as far as Yaman, *as is mentioned in Holy Writ itself*, and maintained to be such not only by all the local traditions but also by Oriental writers.'‡

The Maulvi seeks to make good his conclusion by a number of passages from the Old Testament which do not bear on the subject, but which happen to contain the word Paran.§ The reader of his book has to be on his guard in reference to these so-called 'proofs from Holy Writ itself,' as also in reference to the Maulvi's citations from the Hebrew Bible. Quotations in an unknown tongue have a great effect upon some minds. The Hebrew scattered up and down the Maulvi's pages, has quite an imposing look, and his inferences are very much to the disad-

\* Syed Ahmed Khan, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 34.

† It may interest the reader to have before him here all the Scripture passages in which the word 'Paran' occurs. GEN. xxi. 21; NUMB. x. 12; xii. 16; xiii. 3, 26; DEUT. i. 1; xxxiii. 2; 1 SAM. xxv. 1, 2; 1 KINGS xi. 18; HAB. iii. 3; and possibly GEN. xiv. 6. A careful perusal of these passages will supply the most effective argument that whatever may be the difficulty in fixing the exact locality of mount Paran, that mountain was certainly not in the neighbourhood of Makka. ✓

‡ Syed Ahmed Khan, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 85.

§ Ibid. 77-79.



vantage of the translators; but a critical investigation of the points on which he makes his case turn, shews that there is nothing in them. On p. 79 he gives us quite an impressive array of Hebrew, which on investigation, amounts to nothing at all: it has, in point of fact, nothing whatever to do with the matter which the Maulvî seeks to establish! We need not impute a motive to the Maulvî; but we certainly cannot compliment him on the light which his quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures shed on the question of his scholarship. The passage he cites is NUMB. xiii. 26, where we read,—

‘And they went (on their return) and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.’

In regard to this verse the Maulvî has the following remarks:—‘As we suspect the faithfulness of the English rendering of the italicised portion of the passage, we hcrewith subjoin the original passage in Hebrew, with the Arabic version of it.’ He then gives the entire verse in both languages: we will select merely the portion that is italicized,—

אל-מדבר פארן קדשה

الى بريمة فاران الى قادش

“While this,” says the Maulvî, (we presume he means the Original) “clearly shows the defect of the English translation, it also corroborates the correctness of our own remark. The true translation of it is, ‘unto the wilderness of Paran, *through* Kadesh,’ a translation that perfectly coincides with the Arabic version. In this case it is quite evident that Paran and Kadesh are the names of two distinct wildernesses.”\*

The Maulvî does not seem aware that this unqualified manner of impugning the scholarship of the Translators, can render no assistance to his argument. Those men had no interest to

\* Syed Ahmed Khan, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 79.

serve in wronging the cause to which he is attached: their interests were advanced in proportion to their accuracy (or 'faithfulness,' as we suppose the Maulvî to term it). But the passage contained the word 'Paran:' that was sufficient for the Maulvî: he must somehow press it into his service,—assured that not one reader in a thousand would take the pains to search up the point for himself, and that by 'kicking up so much dust,' people would begin to think that there really must be 'something in it.' Not only, however, does not the Hebrew nominal affix  $\text{ן}$   $\text{ר}$  ( $\text{âh}$ ) ever mean 'through,' but neither also does his own Arabic  $\text{إلى}$  ( $\text{iley}$ ). The meaning of each particle is 'to,' 'towards,' 'in the direction of,' 'even to,' 'as far as.'\* The Hebrew affix and the Arabic prefix particle carry much the same meaning that the affix 'wards' does in such expressions as 'homewards,' 'Qiblawards,' 'Kadeshwards.' Any of these English prepositions may be adopted, and the Maulvî can do what he likes with them: but his word 'through' has nothing whatever to do with the subject. There really is nothing to be added to what the English Translators have given in this place. We feel obliged to assure the Maulvî that the passage has nothing to do with the point he seeks to establish. ¶

The case, alas! exhibits but another feature of the tactics of the Muḥammadan controversialist,—the invention of difficulties where in fact none exist. The cases we have given are but samples of the manner in which, throughout all his treatises, this accomplished apologist of Islām manipulates the materials in order to suit them to his own purpose. It is difficult to refrain from commiserating a man who is so hopelessly the victim of a foregone conclusion. He still holds on to those portions of the Scriptures from which nearly a century ago his great Persian co-religionist was beaten away by the wisdom and learning of good Henry Martyn, but he adopts another line of defence,—thereby tacitly conceding that the defence set up by his learned predecessor is

\* Cnf. for the Hebrew, the Lexicons of Gesenius, Fürst, and Davies; and for the Arabic, those of Richardson and Lane.

no longer tenable. These are the tactics of the street,—tactics with which every Missionary to Muhammadans is thoroughly familiar, and which reveal a solicitude for triumph and not for truth.

The allusions to the locality in question, contained in the chapter of the Book of NUMBERS from which the Maulvi makes the above citation, are not without importance in the present enquiry. The Israelites had arrived at the borders of the Promised Land, and Moses sent forward spies to bring a report of it. In *ver.* 3 we are told that he sent on this mission one of the leading men of each of the twelve tribes 'from the wilderness of Paran.' We then have their names, and a brief account of the manner in which they discharged the duty with which they had been entrusted, and in *ver.* 26 we are told that they came back again to the camp of Israel, to that same place. The point to mark is that the place from which they took their departure and to which they returned was 'the wilderness of Paran.' Now, that the Paran here referred to was not the same as that in the Makkan territory, is evident from the entire connexion of the narrative. The only alternative left to the Muhammadan is to contend that the forty years' wanderings of the Israelites included a journey to southern Arabia,—a conception so grotesque, and so remote from the historical record, that charity forbids our crediting him with so much imagination. ✕

It is important to observe that the circumstance of Hagar having obtained for her son a wife 'out of the Land of Egypt,' goes a great way towards localizing and identifying the Paran where he settled, and shewing that it must have been some locality not far from that country. It is beyond all reasonable doubt that the 'wilderness of Paran' where the two outcasts settled was situated on the high road which connected Egypt with Palestine.

These, however, are not the only difficulties of a local nature, in which Muhammadans are involved by the interpretation they put upon the passage in DEUTERONOMY. One most serious

consideration is that even Muḥammad himself nowhere gives the passage any such interpretation as the one his followers thus give it.

Further, some of them argue that the passage is to be interpreted *prophetically*,—that it alludes to the circumstance that just as Moses received the Law on mount Sinai, so likewise would Christ receive from God the Injil on mount Scir, and Muḥammad the Qur'ān on mount Paran. As to mount Scir, we have already said all that the case needs. Regarding mount Paran, it is quite true that during the latter portion of the period of Muḥammad's first marriage, when he was still a resident of Makka, he was wont to indulge his natural love of solitude by frequently retiring to a cave in a certain hill close to the city, and continuing there for days together. Here it is that he at length professed to have received visits from celestial beings,—notably, from Gabriel, and in at least one instance, from the Divine Being Himself in person.\* Muslims, accordingly, find no difficulty in applying the words,—'God shined forth from mount Paran.' Unfortunately, however, they overlook several matters of essential importance. In the first place, the hill in which the said cave was situated was not Paran, but Hīrā (or Hārā, as it is variously called). In the second place, the hill called Paran is two days' journey from Makka,—a day's journey in Arabia being twenty miles;† while mount Hīrā (or, as its post-Muhammadan name is, Jabal Nūr) is in the immediate neighbourhood of the city.‡ In the third place, though Muḥammad associated the reception of the first five verses of his 'revelation' with the little cave in mount Hīrā, yet the great body of it was 'received' by him in fragments as occasion required, in his own dwellings at Makka and Madīna. This last point Muḥammadans seek to elude by maintaining that the whole Qur'ān was brought down to him by Gabriel for his inspection in that cave.§

\* Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, ii. 55—96.

† Mrs. Ali, *Musulmanns of India*, i. 26.

‡ Ali Rey, *Travels in Arabia*, ii. 64 (edn. Lond. 1816); Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 94; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, ii. 55; Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 111.

§ Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 30, 46.

It is important for Muhammadans to note that the verse does not contain a prophecy at all. It merely embodies a historical allusion to the circumstance that at each of those three mountains the glory of God had been, at different times, it may be, during the pilgrimage of the Israelites, displayed in the sight of all the people. Thus, as to mount Sinai, see EXODUS, xix; as to Seir, see NUMBERS, xvi; and as to Paran, see NUMBERS, xiii. These three mountains were all of them in comparative proximity to each other;\* and the events alluded to in the passage, occurred during the lifetime of Moses. But if it be urged that there is any difficulty in specifying three different occasions on which these several mountain districts figured thus prominently in the history of the Israelites in the Desert, we have no concern in contending for the number; for the comparative proximity of the localities to one another renders it not at all improbable that the words Sinai, Seir, and Paran here denote comprehensively the great scene of the one sublime transaction of the giving of The Law, together with all the stupendous supernatural occurrences that accompanied that event; and the expressions 'came,' 'rose up,' 'shined forth,' refer, all of them, to one and the same glorious manifestation of the Divine presence. So distinctly were these localities associated in the minds of the Israelites with the sublime wonders which had already rendered them famous, that they were mentioned ages afterwards by the prophets and poets of the nation. Thus, Deborah and Barak (JUDGES, v. 1—5) make allusion to Seir; David (PSALMS, lxviii. 7, 8, 17, 18) makes allusion to Sinai; and Habakkuk (HAB. iii. 3, 4) makes allusion to Paran. Lastly, the hill Paran, in the territory of Makka, was one of the numerous, moderate-sized eminences so common in the Hijâz. But the majestic tone of the allusion to the Paran of the Scriptures, naturally suggests something more than a mere hill. And, as a matter of fact, the mount Paran to which the passage in DEUTERONOMY alludes, is so large as to be visible at a very

\* Wilson, *Lands of the Bible*, i. 290, 337, 340 (edn. Edinburgh, 1847).

great distance. It has, moreover, enormous precipices, such as to render ascent impossible, excepting on one only of its sides: and even there, the ascent is difficult. This huge mountain is situated in 'the wilderness of Paran,' about three days' journey from mount Sinai. It is so lofty, indeed, as to be visible from this latter mountain.\* The last clause of the verse,—'From His right hand went forth a fiery law for them,'—embodies an allusion which applies in no way whatever either to the mission of Christ or of Muḥammad; but which, on the other hand, applies in every particular to what were then matters of history;—we refer to the going forth from Jehovah of a 'fiery law' for the Israelites: the fact being that the Decalogue was handed down to Moses amid circumstances which are most solemnly and fittingly described by such language.

Muḥammadans, in fact, misunderstand what is the real point in dispute when they cheer themselves with the reflection that even Jewish and Christian travellers and divines are not agreed among themselves as to the exact locality of the Paran of Scripture. We are not aware that it has ever been as much as doubted among Jewish and Christian writers as to the claim of the Fârân near Makka: the only point in dispute is the one indicated by the late Dr. John Wilson, of Bombay,—whether the mount Paran of Scripture is or is not in any way connected with the majestic mountains that enclose the Wâdî Fairân of the Sinaitic peninsula,—an entirely different question. Niebuhr is disposed to reply to it in the affirmative; Burckhardt in the negative.† The Hebrew 'Pârân' and the Arabic 'Fairân' may, as far as etymology goes, be identical denominations. Dr. Wilson has pointed

\* Cf. Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. PARAN. See also Art. IDUMÆA, SEIR, SHUR, SINAI. Much interesting information, corroborative of this view, may be found in Wilson, *Lands of the Bible*, i. 199 seqq., and Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria*, 604 seqq. (edn. Lond. 1829). See also I.e Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, iii. 747—758; Tillemont, *Mémoires*, x. 453; Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, i. 186.

† Niebuhr, *Travels in Arabia*, i. 189 (edn. Edinburgh, 1792); Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria*. See also Carolus, *Geographia Sacra à Sancto Paulo*, 317.

out that in the Scripture passages in which the word occurs, it seems to be used in a comprehensive sense, as applicable not merely to some particular part or parts of the desert contiguous to Sinai and south of Judæa, but to a large portion, if not the whole, of Arabia Petræa; and it may thus *include* the district of the Wâdi Fairân, from which it may also have derived its name. To this view Dr. Wilson (who, it should be observed, wrote from personal observation of the locality) sees no objection; and adds that if it be the correct view, it corresponds entirely with the nature of the place, and suggests a very sublime interpretation of the most sublime poetry of Habakkuk,—

‘ God came from Teman,—  
 Yea, the Holy One from mount Paran :  
 His glory covered the heavens,  
 And the earth was full of His praise,  
 And His brightness was as the light.  
 He had horns (*i. e.* rays) coming out of His hand,  
 And there was the hiding of His power.  
 He stood and measured the earth ;  
 He beheld and drove asunder the nation :  
 And the everlasting hills were scattered ;  
 The perpetual hills did bow :—  
 His ways are everlasting !

I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction ;  
 Yea, the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble !’

These ‘curtains’ were probably the tents of the Midian Cushites, of whose priest Moses kept the flock in these very parts, where also he obtained, as his wife, the daughter of his master, who is called an Ethiopian or Cushite.\* In the sublime imagery of the passage, the prophet clearly intended to commemorate the historical fact, that when God descended to give The Law to His people, the Divine glory was revealed from Teman (or Ma’an), in the east of Edom, to Paran (or Serbâl) in the west. As a matter of fact, that glory literally covered the heavens over this extent of country, and His majestic presence, indicated by the thunderings and earthquakes, shook the land.†

\* Cnf. EXOD. iii. 1, and NUMB. xii. 1. X

† Wilson, *Lands of the Bible*, i. 201-2.

The whole case shews, by a very curious but fatal instance, the great eagerness of Muḥammadan divines to bring into the service of their faith that connexion of mountains with religion which is so frequent in all religions, and in none more so than in Judaism and Christianity.\* Sinai and Tabor, Hermon and Moriah, Zion and Lebanon, are instances that will at once suggest themselves. Möhler, again, reminds us of Olympus, among the Greeks; of Maru, the source of the Ganges, among the Hindûs; of the hills which cause the cataracts of the Nile, among the ancient Egyptians; of the Albordi among the Persians; and of the Phrygian title of Cybele—*viz.* 'the Mother of Mountains.'† It would be interesting to enquire what may be the philosophy of that connexion, how the practice could have originated, and which of all the religions came first to exhibit this instinct for connecting mountains with its solemnities: but this would be aside from our present purpose. It remains to observe that Muḥammadans cannot appeal with success to their dogma regarding the right interpretation of the words in DEUTERONOMY, until it be granted that Seir is a mountain in Galilee, to the north of Judæa, and not in Idumæa, to the south of it; and that Paran is a mountain near Makka, and not in Arabia Petræa, five hundred miles to the north.‡

We must ask the reader's forbearance for this digression, introduced with the view of shewing with what uncommon facility Muslim divines manipulate mountains. We may now return to the wanderings of Hagar.—It is obvious from the narrative that on being sent away from the home of Abraham, the forlorn out-cast bent her steps homewards towards her native country of Egypt. On her first departure she went in a southerly direction to the Isthmus of Suez; and when she reached the Desert of Shur

\* The curious reader will find more about this subject of mountains in connexion with the Muslim faith in Burckhardt, *Arabia*, ii. 230, and in the twentieth Chapter of Burton's *Pilgrimage*.

† Möhler, *Über das Verhältniss des Islams zum Evangelium*, 355 (edn. Regensburg, 1839).

‡ The *Christian Remembrancer* (Jan. 1855), 136.



she was met by the angel and ordered to return to her mistress.\* On the occasion of her second departure she was still bent on taking the same direction, and settled, with her son (then approaching an age when he would be able to care for her and become her protector) in the wilderness of Beersheba. The contention that Paran and Makka were one and the same place is a piece of special pleading designed to meet the exigencies of the case. There were, and have subsequently been, many Parans, Havilahs, etc. in the great continent of Arabia. The district of Paran to which allusion is made in the narrative in GENESIS took its name from a city so called. The city of Paran was situated in Arabia Deserta, about three days' journey east of Elath; while Makka is situated in the district of Hijâz, at least five hundred miles south of Paran. The force of all this is realized at once by a glance at a map.

What may have become of the descendants of Ishmael after his decease is a question that belongs to a period of history with which the present portion of the argument has no direct concern. It is enough for our purpose that the oldest records in existence that relate the events of the patriarchal period, are absolutely silent as to any evidence of such a circumstance as that of Ishmael having been a resident of Makka. On the other hand, that evidence is such as fairly entitles us to conclude that he never became a resident either of Makka or of any other place in southern Arabia. There is, in fact, no evidence whatsoever, apart from the mere traditions of the pagan Arabs, that Ishmael was at any period a resident of Makka. And it is important to note the plain contradiction thus pointed out between that tradition on the one hand, and the statements of Scripture on the other, as to the place of Ishmael's settlement on his departure from the home of Abraham.†

\* See Rosenmüller's *Biblical Geography* translated by Morren in the *Biblical Cabinet*, xi. 6 (edn. Edinburgh, 1836).

† Stobart, *Islâm and its Founder*, 17—19, 34, 35.

And equally contrary to the evidence of history is the opinion so essential in the Muhammadan faith, that Makka was ever visited by Abraham.

The verse of the Qur'an on which Muslims chiefly rely for evidence that Abraham visited Makka occurs in Sûra xxii (Hajj) 27, where we read,—

وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ ۚ

'We gave the site of the House for an abode unto Abraham.'

The traditions themselves, however, are (as we have already seen) not at all agreed on the question whether Abraham ever became a permanent resident of the city. But even if they were agreed, this would not constitute it a fact; for it is opposed to the evidence of the Jewish records, the writers of which lived many centuries before Muhammad, and must therefore be acquitted of any design to subvert his claims.

Born in Mesopotamia, at Ur of the Chaldees,\* Abraham continued to reside there till after his first 'call,' in obedience to which† he went and dwelt in the land of Haran. Here, in course of time, on the death of his father, he received a second 'call,' and with it the first intimation of 'the promise;' whereupon, at the Divine behest he quitted Haran,‡ and went to dwell in the

\* GEN. xi. 26, 28, 31.—'And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram Nahor, and Haran. And Haran died before his father Terah, in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Terah took Abram his son.....and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan. And they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.'

† GEN. xv. 7.—'And He said unto him—I am Jehovah who brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land to inhabit it.'

‡ GEN. xii. 1—6.—'Now Jehovah had said unto Abram—Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation; and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as Jehovah had said unto him; and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth into the

rich plain of Moreh in the land of Canaan.\* There it was that he received the first distinct promise of the future heritage and greatness of his posterity.† Finding himself, however, regarded with unfriendly eyes by 'the Canaanite,' he next removed to the strong mountain country that lay between Ai and Bethel, whence he was at length driven by famine into Egypt.‡ After his return thence he again took up his residence in his mountain home, where occurred the separation from Lot, on which event the great patriarch removed to the land of Canaan,§ and took up his abode at Hebron in the plain of Mamre,—a city which was situated in the direct line of communication between Egypt and Palestine. The portion of country in which his new home was situated lay to the westward,—Lot preferring the plains of Jordan, and journeying eastwards thereto from the place where they separated. It was concerning the country thus chosen by

land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land'

\* ACTS vii. 2-4,—'And Stephen said—Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken! The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran (in Grk. = Haran); and said unto him—Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I will shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran; and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed into this land wherein ye now dwell.'

† GEN. xii. 7,—'And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said—Unto thy seed will I give this land. And there he built an altar unto the LORD who appeared unto him.'

‡ GEN. xii. 8-10,—'And Abram removed thence' (from 'the place of Sichem, in the plain of Moreh,' in the land of Canaan) 'unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent,—having Bethel on the west, and Hai (= Ai) on the east. And there he built an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed,—going still towards the south. And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was grievous in the land.'

§ GEN. xiii. 12, 13,—'Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan. And Lot journeyed east. And they' (*viz.* Lot and his following, and Abraham and his following) 'separated themselves the one from the other. And Abram dwell in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.'

Abraham that Jehovah said—'To thy seed will I give it.\* Here, when the patriarch was eighty-six years of age, occurred the birth of Ishmael† and, fourteen years later, the birth of Isaac.‡ Here too it was that he interceded with God on behalf of the doomed cities. He afterwards journeyed south, and dwelt at Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur, in the land of the Philistines.§ Thence, in process of time, he removed to Beersheba, situated on the north-west border of the territory of the Philistines, where for a long time he sojourned,|| and where, moreover, he was residing at the time of the sacrifice.¶ His last change of residence appears to have been from Beersheba back to Hebron.

\* GEN. xiii. 14—18,—And Jehovah said unto Abram, after Lot was separated from him,—Lift up, now, thy eyes, and look, from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for, all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise thou, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamie, which is in Hebron; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

† GEN. xvi. 16,—And Abram was fourscore and six years old when Hagar bare him Ishmael,

‡ GEN. xvii. 21, 24,—'My covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee this set time next year. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.' Ch. xxi. 1, 2,—'And Jehovah visited Sarah, as He had said: and Jehovah did unto Sarah as He had spoken; for Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age at the set time of which God had spoken to him.'

§ GEN. xx. 1,—'And Abraham journeyed thence toward the south country, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.' Ch. xxvi. 1,—'And there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham: and Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, unto Gerar.'

|| GEN. xxi. 31—33,—'Wherefore he called that place Beersheba' (*i.e.* the Well of the Oath), because there they sware both of them' (*i.e.* Abraham and Abimelech). 'Thus made they a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech rose up, and Phicol the chief captain of his host; and they returned into the land of the Philistines. And he' (*viz.* Abraham) 'planted a grove in Beersheba, and there called on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God. And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.'

¶ GEN. xxii. 19,—'So Abraham returned unto his young men: and they rose up and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.'

where Sarah died,\* and where at length at the age of a century and three quarters died also the patriarch himself,—his last resting place being by the side of Sarah in the cave of Machpelah.†

Such is a brief outline of the wanderings of Abraham as recorded in the original document. It is seldom that the geography of the lifetime of a man living in a remote age has been so carefully recorded, and so jealously and almost miraculously preserved as this of Abraham. The steps of Abraham from his birth to his death have been linked together as if the writer had forecast the geographical difficulties which the wild traditions of Arabia would in after times create. There is not, either in Scripture or in Josephus, the most distant allusion to such an event as his having at any time journeyed further eastward or southward than is thus indicated.‡

It is, in fact, impossible to prove that Abraham ever either resided in Makka or even visited the place; and the facts of his history, as far as they are known, are plainly adverse to such a supposition. There is, moreover, not merely in the outline of his wanderings provided to our hands in Scripture, but also in the nature of the case, everything that is calculated to render such a supposition in the highest degree improbable. And from what we shall yet discover as to his personal predilections as regards the members of his family, it is in the abstract most improbable that he should have ignored the existence of his favourite Isaac, his 'only son,' and have undertaken a journey at once so inconvenient, so perilous, and so purposeless, as a journey to such a remote locality as the city of the Ka'ba would have been. It is

\* GEN. xxiii. 2, 19,—‘And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of Machpelah before Mamre; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan.’

† GEN. xxv. 9, 10,—‘And his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre,—the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth; there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.’

‡ Smith, *Old Testament History*, 60; Stobart, *Islam and its Founder*, 35.

impossible to admit what the tradition affirms without admitting also what it certainly implies,—namely, either that there was a split in the patriarchal home of which the original document says nothing ; or, that not Abraham and Ishmael alone, but also Isaac, Sarah, and the other members of the family went and resided in Makka ! The legend, appears to be of a piece with another legend attributed to Muḥammad and most religiously held by the generality of his followers, to the effect that the patriarch Moses went on pilgrimage to Makka with seventy thousand Israelites ! \*

Thus much for the light which the Taurât throws upon the subject. Some other points of a comparatively subordinate nature arising out of the case as represented in the Muslim traditions quoted above, require attention.

In the first place, the Islâmic traditions are contrary to the statements of the Taurât as to the more immediate cause, on each occasion, of Hagar's departure from the patriarchal home. What may have been the particular part enacted by Sarah in reference to the removal of Hagar is clearly not of itself a matter of much importance to the present enquiry. Since, however, it is expressly asserted by Muslim authorities that Sarah demanded her removal 'in a fit of jealousy,' we naturally turn to the only authoritative record now extant which affords any information in relation to the point.

Fully possessed of the idea we have mentioned as to what was the real occasion of Hagar's removal, the Islâmic legends represent that Sarah, in the fury of her jealousy and anger towards her, took an oath that she would cut three pieces of flesh out of her body. To what parts of the body reference was thus made the traditions deemed it needless to mention. The poor slave-girl was greatly distressed at this heartless and wicked threat ; and Abraham ventured to intercede with his irate partner

\* Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 17.

on her behalf. By way of compromise he sought to limit the action of Sarah, as to the fulfilment of her oath, by suggesting that one piece should be cut out by an incision in each ear. As to the remaining excision it will be sufficient to allude to that carnal rite which is the chief characteristic of the Abrahamic covenant.\*

\* The question of the origin of circumcision is one that has greatly exercised the minds of historians. Thus much at least is certain,—the rite has from time immemorial existed not only among Israelites, but among other Abrahamic races as well. Among them may be mentioned not only races more or less directly descended from Abraham, but also races that have been subjugated by them. Among most of these races, persons of both sexes are subjected to the rite. Gibbon throws doubt upon its religious significance and purpose, and even upon its original connexion with Abraham; but Sayyid Ahmad Khān affirms without hesitation, that circumcision was introduced by Abraham. The Ishmaelitic races administer the rite at the age of thirteen in the case of males,—that being about the age of Ishmael when his father circumcised him. It is now practised among the Arabs, the Abyssinians, the Copts, the Egyptians, the Nubians, and the Hottentots. The curious reader may find some interesting information on this whole subject in the following places,—Herodotus, lib. ii, cap. 14, 37, 104; Strabo, lib. xvi, cap. 761; Diodorus Siculus, lib. i, cap. 28, and iii, 32; Mishqāt, i. 129; Reland, *De Religione Mohammedicā*, 58-9, 75; Bohovius, *De Circumcisione*, 22, and *Turkish Liturgy*, 145; Marsham, *Canon Chronicus*, 72-74, 168; Niebuhr, *Description De l'Arabie*, 67-71, and his *Travels in Arabia*, ii. 248-251; Pocock, *Specimen*, 19, 303, 304, 309, 310, 319, 320; Fabricius, *Lux Christiana*, 720; Hyde, *Opera*, ii. 236 (edn. Oxon. 1727); *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains*, tom. ii; Priaux, *Questions Mosaiques*, 384, 386; Michaelis, *Mosaïches Recht*, vol. iv, p. clxxxv; and his *Questions à Niebuhr*, 185-192; Eisch and Grubers *Encyclopædie*, ix. 268 (Art. BESCHNEIDUNG); Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 331 (Art. CIRCUMCISION); Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 844 (ch. xlvii); Adams, *Narrative*, 112; Mills, *History of Muhammadanism*, 320-21 (edn. Lond. 1818); Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 394 (edn. Lond. 1829); The *Quarterly Review* (Jan. 1877), 223; Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 282; Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Various Religions of the pre-Islamic Arabs*, 5; Arnold, *Islam and Christianity*, 115; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, ii. 108; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 76; Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. iii; Abu'l-Fida, *Vita Mohammedis*, p. 2 (edn. Gagnier, Oxon. 1723); Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, lib. I, cap. x, sect. 5, and xii, 3; VIII. x. 3; XIII. ix. 1, and xi. 3; *Against Apion*, lib. I, sect. 22; *Life*, sect. 23; Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, 407, 491 (edn. Lond. 1874); Russell, *Polynesia*, 36 (edn. Lond. 1852); Müller, *Geschichte des Americanischen Urreligionen*, 285, 479-80, 640 (edn. Basel, 1855); Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, Art. BESCHNEIDUNG; Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, ii. 171; Dollenger, *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, 790 (edn. Regensburg, 1857); Kenrick, *Ancient Egypt*, i. 450 (edn. Lond. 1850); Livingstone, *Researches in South Africa*, 146-7; Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, iii. 287; Kurtz, *Geschichte des Alten Bundes*, i. 185; Origen, *Opera*, v. 138-9 (edn. Lommatzsch); Uhlemann, *Aegyptisches Alterthumskunde*, ii. 257 (edn. Leipzig, 1858). λ

A reference, however, to the narrative as contained in the Book of GENESIS reveals the unsoundness of such a view of the case. Thus, in GEN. xvi. 4—7, we read,—

‘And when Hagar saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram—My wrong be upon thee! I gave my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between me and thee! But Abram said unto Sarai—Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her. And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness,—by the fountain in the way to Shur.\*

Thus much for the occasion of her departure the first time: as to the second time the occasion is thus indicated in GEN. xxi. 9, 10,—

‘And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham—Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son,—with Isaac.†

From the former of these passages it appears that the occasion of her departure, in the first instance, was the severity with which Sarah resented Hagar’s disrespectful demeanour towards her. Unable to brook the chastisement which, from their relationship as mistress and maid, Sarah was entitled with due moderation to administer, the girl, whether from fear of her mistress’s anger or from a feeling of wounded pride, absconded.‡ But in the second instance no reference whatever is made to any further misdemeanour on Hagar’s part. Indeed, it would seem that for the whole thirteen years or more that had intervened, her conduct had been regulated by a careful observance of the behest of the celestial Visitant who had found her on the former occasion. However this may be, the sole reason given in the record for the second departure was the umbrage which Sarah,

\* Fuller, *Genesis*, 376, in his Complete Works in one Volume (edn. Lond. 1862).

† Jennings, *Jewish Antiquities*, 9 (edn. Lond. 1825); Smith, *Old Testament History*, 61; Fuller, *Genesis*, 383.

‡ Priaulx, *Questiones Mosaiæ*, 365 (edn. Lond. 1854).



now an aged person, took at some frolicsomeness on the part of young Ishmael. The trouble seems to have reached the culminating point at the great feast given on the occasion of Isaac's weaning. So extraordinary a circumstance as that which had recently occurred in the family, remembering the advanced age of Sarah, appears to have provoked the humour of this too incautious 'lad,' and led, as would seem, to some puerile fun at the aged lady's expense, and in a moment of mortification she demanded his removal from her sight,—together, of course, with his mother. The expulsion of the lad without his mother is clearly a course that would have involved some practical difficulty owing to his comparatively early time of life. Besides, Sarah would in that case never have been free from a haunting dread lest the return of the lad to see his parents should occasionally bring her face to face with him, and thus risk the mortification of a repetition of his misdemeanour.

That Ishmael was kept in the dark all those years as to the nature of his own connexion with the family is not for a moment to be supposed. And inasmuch as the desire of Sarah's heart had now been fulfilled in the birth of her son, the continued presence of 'the bondwoman and her son' would, by the recollections it would awaken, detract very materially from her sensations of motherly pride, and of enjoyment of the newly acquired treasure. She had evidently contracted by this time a special aversion to both Ishmael and his mother, and nothing would pacify her but their removal from her sight for all time coming. 'Jealousy' was clearly not Sarah's feeling in the second instance, for she had now not merely been blessed with a son,—and he born out of due time,—but that son was he concerning whom 'the promise' had been made. If jealousy was likely anywhere, it would surely have now been rather in the mind of Hagar, whose son had by the advent of Isaac, been proved to be not the Child of Promise, and had accordingly been disinherited.

As to the first departure, that jealousy had no place in the

mind of Sarah, is an assertion which no one has any right to make; but to assert, in the face of the language of the narrative, that 'Sarah expelled Hagar in a fit of jealousy' is pure assumption. The purpose of the Muslim, however, is not answered unless it be assumed that not Hagar only, but also her son was expelled in this 'fit of jealousy.' We think it has been shewn that such an assumption is destitute of support.

A much more difficult and significant problem yet awaits solution at the hands of the Muslim. If before the time of the birth of Ishmael Sarah was 'past age,'\* and had so far lost all heart and hope as to make proposals of such a nature to her husband,—even going so far as herself to take her maid and give her to her husband to be his wife, thus either sharing her own rights or relinquishing them,—is there nothing calling for the Muslim's serious consideration in the fact that this same person became a mother for the first time in her life so many years after all hope had vanished? In the very nature of things, jealousy could hardly have been the occasion, for it was for the very purpose of obtaining offspring for her husband that she had herself suggested the arrangement.

As to the immediate cause, therefore, of the removal of Hagar and her son the Islâmic traditions differ as much as possible from the writing in the Taurât which Muslims declare they receive as the Word of God. And as a consequence of this divergence Muslims draw some unguarded conclusions in reference to the localities of Hagar's sojourn at the different periods of her departure from the patriarchal home.

Here, again, it is important to keep separate the events that transpired in connexion with each of the two departures. The locality where Hagar rested on the first occasion is thus mentioned in GEN. xvi. 7,—

'And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness,—by the fountain in the way to Shur.' †

\* HEB. xi. 11, 12. Cnf. ROM. iv. 17—21.

† Rosenmüller in the *Biblical Cabinet*, xvii. 195 (edn. Edinburgh, 1837); Priaulx, *Questions Mosuïce*, 366; Fuller, *Genesis*, 376.

In the first place, Muslims quote this verse to prove their theory of the origin of the Well ZAMZAM. Misled by the name 'Shur,' they forget that Ishmael,—who in their mind is the central figure in connexion with the origin of the Well,—is not yet born! They forget, too, that the final flight of Hagar with her son did not occur till at least sixteen years later; and that nothing is said as to the well originating now; while the statement that the angel 'found her sitting by the well' might very fairly be quoted to shew that the well existed before this time. The opinion of the Muslim is, indeed, such a patent mistake as regards the well or fountain mentioned in this passage, that the only apology for him is the circumstance of the existence at the present day in the Makkan territory of a hill called 'Thûr' which his traditions teach him to believe is no other than the 'Shur' mentioned in the verse we have just quoted. But in every country there are places which though far removed from one another, yet bear the same name. In no country is this phenomenon more frequent than in Arabia, as may be seen at once by a glance at a map. And there is in the case of Arabia this additional consideration, that the Ishmaelitic tribes carried with them into southern Arabia the names of persons and localities already revered among them, and commemorated persons, places, and events by giving their names to the places where they settled. Havilah, Shur, Paran, Hagar are each of them names of places and districts situated hundreds of miles from one another. Now, the Shur mentioned in the passage just cited was not a mountain of that name, but a district. It was situated in the land of the Philistines, on the high road from Palestine to Egypt:—Cnf. xx. 1. This same Shur is in fact localized in ch. xxv. 18, where we are told that the home of Ishmael and his offspring was 'from Havilah unto Shur that is before Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria.' Properly, 'in the face of Egypt'—עַל־פְּנֵי מִצְרַיִם, *i. e.* to the east of it.\*

\* For a thorough investigation of this whole subject see *The Biblical Cabinet*, vol. xi, p. 5 seqq., and the Appendix to ch. 1, on p. 36.

Besides, the Well ZAMZAM does not lie on the way from Hebron to the mount Thûr of Muslim legend, but some miles to the south-east of that hill, and in the heart of the city of Makka; so that the Muslim gains nothing even if the legend be admitted. The locality and name of the fountain by which Hagar sat are expressly stated in GEN. xvi. 14, where we are told that,—

‘The well was called Beerlahairoi. Behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.’\*

This is the same Kadesh that is mentioned in ch. xx. 1, situated in the territory of the Philistines in western Palestine. The latter place, Bered, can, however, no longer be identified, nor its exact position specified.

Not unimportant, moreover, is the mode of alluding to the fountain adopted in *ver.* 7, where we read,—

‘The angel of the LORD† found her by a fountain of water (עַל־עֵין הַמַּיִם) in the wilderness, by the fountain

(עַל הָעֵינַן) in the way to Shur.‡

The second clause is obviously meant by the writer to be partriarchal,—the intention being to localize and specify some particular well. The adoption of the definite article in the second instance must be understood to imply that allusion is made to a certain spring well-known to the readers of the Book, and situated, in the manner so common everywhere in eastern countries, near the highway, and used by travellers.

\* The partriarchal home was at this time in Hebron, in the plain of Mamre, west of the Jordan. The poor outcast girl, having in all probability been brought by Sarah from Egypt at the close of their sojourn in that country, was obviously, now that she was cast upon the world, bending her steps back to her own home and people. She obviously intended to return to her native country, Egypt. Her path led, therefore, through the

\* Smith, *Old Testament History*, 54; Fuller, *Genesis*, 376.

† ‘The angel of the LORD’.—Cnf. p. 63, note.\*

‡ ‘On the way to Shur’.—This was the nearest way to Egypt, her native land.

desert of Shur (or Dshofar), extending from the south-west of Palestine down to the head of the Red Sea, and even considerably southward on its eastern and western coast. Whilst in this wilderness, and 'on the way' to a locality more properly called Shur, she rested beside a spring. Here an angel of God appeared to her. Though aware of all the facts, he asked her whence she had come and whither she was bound. And when she had told him the occasion of her flight, she was surprised by the angel's command to 'return to her mistress' and to submit patiently to her vexations. This was not intended as a retaliation for Hagar's overbearing conduct which had caused so much discord in the family, but as an admonition that she owed all her earthly happiness to her connexion with Abraham's house; that on his account only she was favoured with the great promises in store for her descendants; and that it was, therefore, more glorious for her to be a neglected servant in the family of such a man than a free woman in the country to which she was about to return. The angel then proceeded to open to her views a future which filled her at once with rapture and amazement. He announced it in measured solemnity, and passed from a comprehensive and general prospect to a detailed and even graphic description. After having promised her an innumerable progeny through a son yet unborn whom she was to call by the name 'Ishmael,' the angel went on to describe in the most apt and powerful language his character and the character of his posterity.\*

Still bent on returning to her old associations, we find her, when sixteen years after this period she was finally dismissed, again taking her way southwards, and 'wandering in the wilderness of Beersheba'—ch. xxi. 14.

In connexion with this second occasion of Hagar's departure from the custody of Abraham, a well is again alluded to in the following terms—ch. xxi. 19,—

\* Kalisch, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 242 (edn. Lond. 1858).

'And God opened her eyes,\* and she saw a well of water.  
And she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave  
the lad drink.'†

That the well here alluded to was not in Makka is rendered clear by the express statement of vv. 14—21, where it is proved that it was situated 'in the wilderness of Beersheba.' That the well in this instance was produced by miracle is a pure assumption of the Muslims,—an assumption which has not a trace of evidence in support of it from anything we find in the text.‡ And having made this stupendous assumption, they are by no means startled by the geographical difficulty that arises in connexion with the attempt they make to shew that this well is identical with the well Zamzam. To hear Muhammadans talk, a person not initiated into the controversy might suppose that whenever one reads of a well in the history of Abraham, Hagar, or Ishmael, it must of necessity be the Well at Makka,—as if in all Palestine and Arabia there were but one well!

There is yet another point which may be mentioned in which the Muslim traditionists, as cited above, reveal a want of circumspection,—namely, as to the question of Ishmael's age at the time of his removal from the patriarchal home.‡ The case presents a very fair instance of what a hash Muhammadans make of history when they are left to themselves. Even Tabari (who is certainly one of the best of the historians, though not one of the oldest of them) says that Isaac was born when Ishmael was passing from his fifth to his sixth year.§ That this opinion as to the age of Ishmael at the time of Isaac's birth is unsound, (even according to Islâmic ideas, is shewn by the fact that down

\* 'Opened her eyes';—That is, directed her attention to that which in her anxiety she had overlooked. (in q. 132. long an)

† Fuller, *Genesis*, 384.

‡ Forster, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, i. 176 (edn. Lond. 1844); Priaulx, *Questions Mosaicæ*, 482.

§ Price, *Essay on Arabia*, 62.

to the present day Muhammadans circumcise their sons at the age of thirteen; and they defer it to that period in commemoration of the fact that Ishmael was circumcised at that age. Now, the circumcision of Ishmael took place long before the birth of Isaac; so that to render the commemoration of any use they ought to perform the act before the completion of the sixth year.\* His precise age at this point of time, though nowhere mentioned in the Qur'an, is easily ascertained. Born when the great patriarch was eighty-six years of age, Ishmael would now, after the weaning of Isaac, be not less than sixteen; for the birth of Isaac did not take place till the patriarch was a hundred years old, and weaning was not usually commenced till a child had at least entered its third year. To put it in another way;—Ishmael was thirteen when he was circumcised; and Isaac was not born till the following year: and between Isaac's birth and the removal of Hagar, Isaac had been weaned. Oblivious, then, as it would seem, of what must have been Ishmael's age at the time, the Muslim authorities represent him as being only a baby in arms. We would have it carefully noted that among the Muslim authorities there are some honourable exceptions; thus, Sayyid Ahmad Khān frankly asserts that 'Ishmael was sixteen years of age at the time of his expulsion from home,'—a statement which he sustains by a foot note.† According to Wolff's account he found this to be the current opinion among the Arabs in the course of his journeys.‡

We admit that there are some passages in the narrative in GENESIS which if hastily quoted might be understood to shew that Ishmael was at the time a mere babe. Thus, in ch. xxi. 14—18 we read,—

\* Forster, *Mahomedanism Unveiled*, ii. 395—7; Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 82 (edn. Lond. 1846).

† Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Historical Geography of Arabia*, 10, 71-72.

‡ Wolff, *Journal*, iv. 71 (edn. Lond. 1827).

‘And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water,\* and gave to Hagar,—putting them on her shoulder,—and the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle; and she cast the child† under one of the shrubs. And she went and sat her down over against him a good way off,—as it were about a bowshot. For she said—Let me not see the death of the child! And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad. And the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her—What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear thou not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand; for I will make him a great nation.’‡

Now, the figures supplied in the course of the narrative as cited at the commencement of this discussion, are such as lead to the conclusion that the references to Ishmael's age which these verses contain must be qualified if we are concerned to entertain an accurate idea of the facts. Nor can *ver. 14* be fairly quoted to shew that he was a mere babe; for such an interpretation would be opposed to the obvious sense of the passage. It would imply that Hagar carried everything on her shoulder,—food, child, bedding perhaps, and water-skin! But such an interpretation is not required by anything in the Original of the passage; and the known age of Ishmael at the time renders it untenable.

Again, Ishmael's being laid in a parched and exhausted condition under the grateful shadow of some wild foliage there in the barren waste, does surely not of necessity imply that he

\* ‘Bottle of Water’;—Formed of a goat-skin, the legs of which were utilized for the purpose of fastening the skin of water over the shoulders of the water-carrier,—a tedious and uncomfortable load, and quite sufficient of itself to soon exhaust the poor girl, as any one who has resided in the East will instantly perceive.

† ‘Cast the child’;—Better, ‘placed the youth.’ Though a growing lad of sixteen or seventeen years of age, it is easy to understand that he would be less able than his mother to bear the heat. He probably leaned upon her until she could no longer endure her various burdens, and he sank exhausted under one of the shrubs, perhaps the *retam*, with which that district still abounds. Cnf. 1 KINGS xix. 5.

‡ Jennings, *Jewish Antiquities*, 9; Fuller, *Genesis*, 384.



was a small babe. It is not impossible that owing to his suffering condition his poor mother bore him in her arms till she too was exhausted, and her strength failing her she 'cast the child under one of the shrubs.' Her 'lifting up the lad' and giving him drink from the skin newly filled with refreshing water, are evidences not that 'the lad' was a small baby, but rather that he was reduced to a low fainting condition by prolonged exposure (such as he, as an only child, must have been little accustomed to) to the fierce rays of the sun while crossing with his mother the barren expanse of country. That there is nothing strained or inadmissible about such an interpretation is shewn by the following quotations from Josephus and from the Scripture-writers.

The word used in this place is הַנֶּעֶר (*hanna'ar*) 'the boy.' This word occurs in other parts of the Book of GENESIS where it clearly refers not to small children or infants. Thus, in ch. xxii. 5,—

'I and the lad (*hanna'ar*) will go yonder and worship.'

The allusion is to Isaac, who was then twenty-five years of age. Again, in ch. xxxiv. 19,—

'And the young man (*hanna'ar*) deferred not to do the thing.'

The person alluded to was Shechem, the son of Hamor, who desired to be married to Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. Further, in ch. xxxvii. 2 we read,—

'Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad (הָיָא נֶעֶר) was with the sons of Bilhah.'

Yet another instance occurs in ch. xli. 12, where we read,—

'And there was with us a young man (נֶעֶר), a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard.'

Here the allusion is to Joseph at a period some time after his seventeenth year above-mentioned. Lastly, in ch. xliii. 8, we read,—

'And Judah said unto Israel his father,—Send the lad (הַנֶּעֶר) with me, etc.'

The 'lad' referred to was Benjamin who would then be between twenty and thirty years of age. He was at that time a married man: so that to speak of him as a 'lad' would not only not be dignified, but would not even be appropriate. But he was the youngest of the family, and between him and Judah, who uses the word, there must have been many years' difference in the matter of age.

That the application of terms which, translated into modern English, imply childhood, to persons who according to our ideas would have passed that period, was thus a somewhat common habit among Jews in former ages, would seem apparent from the usage of the New Testament writers, and also of Josephus. Thus, in MARK v. 23 the distressed parent speaks of his daughter, twelve years of age, as his *θυγάτριον* ('little daughter'); while in *vv.* 39—42 she is twice called *κοράσιον*, and four times *παιδίον*,—both of which terms, especially the latter, are used when the idea of *diminutiveness* is intended to be conveyed. Still more strikingly to the point is Josephus's allusion to Judah, the senior member of the family of Jacob, whom (*Antiqq.* II. vi. 8) he represents as describing himself and his brethren as 'young men' (*νέοι*), though Judah was then a family-man of forty-seven years of age. Herod, also, at the age of twenty-five, Josephus (*Antiqq.* XIV. ix. 2; *Wars*, I. x. 4) calls 'a very young man' (*νέω παντάπασιν ὄντι*). Aristobulus he styles 'a very young child' (*παιδὸς παντάπασιν ὄντος Ἀριστοβούλου*), though he was then sixteen years of age. Domitian, again, was 'exceedingly young' (*νέος γὰρ ἦν ἐν παντάπασιν*) when at the age of eighteen he set out on his great German expedition (*Wars*, VII. iv. 2). And Samson's wife (*Antiqq.* V. viii. 6) and Ruth (*Antiqq.* V. ix. 2, 3) he calls 'girls,' 'children' (*παῖς* in each place) though they were old enough to have become widows.

The load, again, with which Hagar must have taken her leave of Abraham, excludes the possibility of Ishmael having been at the time a baby in arms, for besides the parcel of food and vessel

of water, there was in all likelihood something also of the nature of bedding and clothing. The Islâmic legend of Hagar's running about between the hills Safâ and Marwa looking for a spring of water, is, moreover, quite contrary to the Jewish record, which represents her as exhausted and disheartened, and sitting at a distance awaiting in agony the event of her son's death. As to the legend that Abraham made the miraculous journey from Hebron to Makka every day, it has to be borne in mind that the Muhammadan never allows his sense of the ridiculous or of the impossible to influence him in matters affecting his creed. He is a staunch adherent of the sublime though self-evident dogma that with the Almighty 'nothing is impossible.' He consequently holds and defends with all gravity the weird idea of this aeronautic expedition of several days' journey being performed before noon every day for a series of years, besides a hard day's work at house-building.\* He dares not entertain a misgiving within the realm of his religion, nor interrogate himself concerning the lie he holds 'in his right hand' (ISA. xlv. 20).

But even if it be admitted, for the sake of argument, that Abraham visited Makka, and that he and Ishmael did, as the legend asserts, build an altar there, it remains for the followers of Islâm to prove that the altar they built stood in any relation to the Ka'ba. They should also shew what advantage accrues to their case by such an admission. Our Lord tells the Jews that the circumstance of their being able to claim Abraham for their patriarch was, in itself considered, of no advantage to them as far as their own responsibility before God was concerned,—that it did not release them from any of the penalties of unbelief and disobedience. The other opinion—that the great patriarch took up his residence in Makka—is one that is more manageable, and comes more within the scope of rational treatment. And we think it has been shewn that the idea that Abraham, or Hagar, or Ishmael ever became a permanent resident of Makka, or even

\* Price, *Essay on Arabia*, 61.

visited the Makkan territory, is destitute of historical support, and contrary to the evidence afforded by the only Records on which a sound opinion in regard to the matter can be formed.

An attempt has been made by some geographers to urge an identity between the word 'Makka' and the word 'Massa,' the name of one of Ishmael's twelve sons (GEN. xxv. 14), with the view of grounding upon this the theory of Ishmael's connexion with the place. This is the more surprising, as it is expressly said in *ver.* 18 that the twelve sons of Ishmael 'dwelt from Havilah unto Shur that is before Egypt'! This asserts, as clearly as language could, that the posterity of Ishmael, or the race typified by him,—the Egypto-Arab (the so-called *Mustârîba*, the mixed, half-caste, or adventitious race, as the Ishmaelitic portion of the Arabs has always been designated),—occupied only the northern parts of the peninsula. Their habitat is not even included in Arabia by those writers who bound the country on the north by an imaginary line drawn from the Râs Muḥammad to the mouths of the Euphrates.\*

The conclusion of the whole matter has been well expressed by Sir William Muir,—Which of his sons it was that Abraham made ready to sacrifice, is not specified in the Qur'ân. We are not at liberty to assume, with the Muslim doctors, that Muḥammad meant Ishmael, nor even that Muḥammad believed the place of sacrifice to have been the vicinity of Makka: still, if the current of ancient tradition already ran so, it is possible that the author of the Qur'ân may, through fear of offending or alienating the Jews of Madîna whom he was eager to attach to his cause, have followed that current, and may from this motive have refrained from mentioning in his book the fact of his acceptance of such a tradition, as by so doing he would have brought the statements of the Qur'ân into direct collision with the statements of those Records which the Jews already held to be infallible.†

\* Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 215 (enf. ii. 124).

† Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, ii. 155, 187.

How to account for the traditions of the patriarchal connexion with Makka does not exactly fall within the idea of the present treatise. Sayyid Ahmad Khāñ argues the settlement of Hagar and Ishmael at Makka from the unchangeableness and permanency of Arabian tradition.\* In a general way there is much force in this method of argument; the difficulties arise when we come to apply it to particular cases. If the Maulvī expects this process of proof to decide in the present instance, he ought also to apply the same rule in the case of a multitude of other Arabian legends which he rejects. The subject has been admirably handled by Forster, Muir, and other writers. It may, however, be appropriate to remark here that on the supposition that the Arabian races were for the most part of Abrahamic descent, it follows that Judaism—though, indeed, in some of its cruder and more undeveloped forms, perhaps,—was, in a general way, the religion they had inherited. This will account in some measure for the avidity with which, at the founding of Islām, legends of the Jewish race were snatched up and appropriated. Under the circumstances, nothing is more natural than that Muḥammad should, in the absence of a real and original revelation of his own, have applied the principle of expurgation and reform to that idolatry, pure and simple, which had reached down to his time. Having seized hold of the theistic idea of Judaism, it was not difficult for him—nor, indeed, would it have been difficult for any man—to perceive how much more in keeping with reason it was than was the gross and benighted idolatry of the Arabs. Applying this monotheistic idea to the religion of the Ka'ba, Muḥammad aimed at divesting that religion of all the image-worship associated with it, while still retaining the dogma of the sacredness of the Ka'ba, together with such legends as were associated with it and with its surrounding objects.†

\* Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Historical Geography of Arabia*, 9.

† The reader who cares to pursue the subject of the wild, makeshift legends of the Muslim divines regarding the connexion of Abraham and Ishmael with Makka, will find some good specimens of Masa'ūdī's in Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 53—6.

Still keeping to the historical part of our study we will now pass on to examine the value of the opinion which Muslims hold concerning the genealogy of Muhammad.\* *history of the desc*

The question as to the descent of Muhammad from Abraham is one which no party to the present controversy need care to enter upon, for Muslims do not deny the descent of the Jews from him. If they did, then the question of the fulfilment in Christ of the promise made by Jehovah concerning the posterity of Isaac, would make it necessary to shew that the question of Muhammad's descent from Abraham is not by any means one that can be allowed to pass unchallenged. As a matter of fact, the question of Muhammad's descent from Ishmael has never been proved. And although there is nothing to discourage the opinion that he believed himself to have been so descended, yet he himself foreclosed the question by declaring it insoluble. But more of this in due course. Meanwhile it is to be noted that even if it could be proved that he was descended from Ishmael, the argument in which we are concerned would still be unaffected; for, long before the exigencies of Islâm gave rise to the controversy, the point was decided by the Divine Being Himself,—‘In Isaac shall thy seed be called.’ The question, however, of the Abrahamic descent of Muhammad is one which for yet another reason it is impossible to settle, or even to argue; for, besides the entire silence of the Bible genealogies regarding the point, the only evidence adducible is of a distinctly party character,—namely, Islâmic; and, as we shall presently have occasion to shew, the evidence even from this quarter is not agreed upon by Muslim authorities themselves.

The races that sprang from Abraham may be divided in a general way into three branches,—his descendants through Ishmael, his descendants through Isaac, and his descendants through Keturah. In consequence of the commingling and intermarriage

\* Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 454, seqq.; Stobart, *Islâm and its Founder*, 21, 36; Green, *Life of Mahomet*, 22, 26, 34 (edn. Lond. 1877).

of these races with the pre-Abrahamic peoples of Arabia, it is impossible to specify with absolute certainty those parts of the country in which their descendants eventually colonized,—they spread in course of time over the entire peninsula, absorbing and being absorbed by other races. But in a general way it may be said that the descendants of Ishmael settled in southern Palestine, and in that part of Arabia Petræa which is usually known as the peninsula of Sinai, bordering on the Red Sea and the Ælanitic gulf, or gulf of Aqaba; those of Isaac, in Palestine to the north of the Ishmaelites and the Philistines; and those of Keturah, in the territory between Arabia, Egypt, and Canaan. Such is the teaching of the only original Records extant in relation to the subject; and they deal, of course, with the earlier descendants. But which of those numerous tribes have all along occupied any particular locality, or whether any careful demarcation of the tribes and their respective territories was ever really recognized by them, are points the absolute settlement of which seems now impossible, and is happily not essential to the present enquiry.

The opinion of the Ishmaelitic ancestry of Muḥammad is said by the Muslim traditions to have been held by himself. Even some Christian writers agree in this statement of the traditions. Thus, Forster says,—‘Mahomet himself, in the Koran, upheld his claims to the princely and priestly honours of his race on this very ground, as an Ishmaelite of the stock of Kedar.’\* In return for this concession, he wins a kind of sneering approval from Sayyid Ahmad Khān, who speaks of that most charitable and learned divine as thus making ‘the deposition of an unwilling witness.’† The concession, however, seems to be without any adequate reason, for it has no basis of fact. We search the Qur’ān in vain for any trace of evidence in support of it. Notwithstanding this, the traditionists are quite confident, from legends, that he

\* Forster, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, i. 248.

† Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Pedigree of Mohammed*, 11.

really did hold the opinion. Whether he did or not, all his faithful adherents fervently hold and contend the point on his behalf.\*

Palgrave adopts the view of the learned Freznel, who contends that the opinion held by Muslim traditionists owes its genesis purely to a desire to manufacture for Muḥammad a higher claim to nobility of birth than really belongs to him. It never would do that 'the prophet of God' should be of inferior ancestry to those whom he or his successors conquered,—he a plebeian, and they the aristocracy. Yet such was the case,—the people of Yaman being the true descendants of Qaḥtān; while Muḥammad, even if the doubtful question of his descent from Ishmael be conceded, was the offspring of an Egyptian woman, and belonged to the tribe known by ethnologists as *Must-Araba*, or 'Half-castes.'†

The opinion as to Muḥammad's descent from Ishmael, or even from Abraham, is regarded by some historians as doubtful, and even untenable. Thus much, however, can be said, that no evidence can be produced to establish either point to the absolute satisfaction of a disinterested enquirer. Nothing, says Burton, in all the annals of the Arabs is more noteworthy than their efforts to maintain the Ishmaelitic descent of Muḥammad; at the same time no historic tenet is more open to doubt or more difficult to prove. For a variety of reasons the advocate of Christianity need not concern himself to disprove such a tenet. Nothing that is vital to our argument is endangered by it. Nor is it easy to see of what real advantage it is to the cause of Islām, inasmuch as the same ancestry is claimable by many whole races of the Arabs in common with the Quraishite race,—a fact which was recognized even in pre-Islāmite times.‡

Besides, all the ancestors of Muḥammad as far back as can be traced were, in common with other Arab tribes, adherents of

\* See Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 183; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. p. ccix; Forster, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, i. 251.

† Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 455 seqq.

‡ Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, 92.



the pre-Islamite image-worship, the head-quarters of which were at the Ka'ba. Not only was the gross fetichism of this temple the religion of Muhammad's ancestors, it was also the religion of himself too for nearly two thirds of his life time. Surely Muslims are not rational in allowing themselves to be led away by the notion that there is any special and personal virtue in being genealogically descended from Ishmael, any more than from Isaac, apart from the consideration of personal character and faith! One who was Himself descended from 'the father of the faithful' proclaimed to the ecclesiastical dignitaries who could boast of no virtue but mere heredity, that they were a 'generation of vipers,'—that they partook more of the character imparted to them by the Old serpent than of the character of the patriarch whose blood flowed in their veins, and that the estimate formed of them at the Divine tribunal was grounded on this principle. 'Think not to say within yourselves—We have Abraham to our father! For God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.' There is nothing upon which an Oriental prides himself so much as upon the question of blood. The question, however, of the genealogical connexion of Muhammad with Ishmael is altogether distinct from the point now under consideration—namely, as to whether Ishmael or Isaac was the Child of Promise. So that even though all Christian scholars were prepared to concede the question of the Ishmaelitic descent of Muhammad, the point which is vital to every earnest man would still remain to be settled.

There are, in fact, no materials existing by which a settlement of the question either way can be effected. Though nearly all the Arabian tribes are undoubtedly of Abrahamic descent, yet there are many of them, notably the descendants of the patriarch by his second marriage, who are not descended from Ishmael. Some historians have accordingly asserted that whereas, on the one hand, the wife of Ishmael, as also his mother, was Egyptian, yet Muhammad was, as to his personal appearance,

not an Arab at all, but a pure Caucasian, with no mixture of Egyptian blood.\* This opinion, however, is entirely conjectural and extremely improbable.† Besides, nothing is gained to the argument by such an assertion, for its effect is merely to shew that Muhammad was not descended from Ishmael through his first wife. This is exactly what the Muslim holds. His aim is to maintain that the descendants of Ishmael were of pure Arab blood. And to secure this dogma he does not even recoil from the grave anachronism embodied in the legend already mentioned—namely, that Ishmael, after having divorced his Egyptian wife, married into a purely Arab tribe,—the Jurhumite chief to whose daughter he was thus united having lived only a short time before the commencement of the Christian æra‡

The genealogy of the race of the Quraish, to which race Muhammad belonged through his great-grandfather Hāshim, cannot be traced with any certitude beyond 'Adnān, who is hence entitled 'the father of the Arabians.'§ This man lived a little more than a century before the commencement of the Christian æra,|| and the descent of Muhammad from him is thus traced through twenty-two of his descendants:—Muhammad was the son of Abdu'l-lāh, who was the son of Abdu'l-Muttalib, the son of Hāshim, the son of 'Abd-Mināf, the son of Qussai, the son of Kilāb, the son of Murra, the son of Ka'b, the son of Lawai, the son of Ghālib, the son of Fahr¶ (the first man that was

\* Brinckman, *Notes on Islām*, i; Burton, *Pilgrimage*, iii. 76; Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 17—20; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. pp. cxcvii, cc.

† The reader may see how the point is made out, by referring to the passage in Sprenger mentioned in the previous foot-note. The process is a marvel of ingenuity.

‡ Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. pp. cviii, xcxi, seqq.; Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 173, 184.

§ Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, INTRODUCTION. Chapters II and III.

|| Green, *Life of Mahomet*, 34, says 122 years; Stobart, *Islām and its Founder*, 36, says 130. Cnf. Sprenger, *Leben des Mohammad*, iii. p. cxxxiii.

¶ Of this man Dr. Sprenger writes that inasmuch as he is the supposed father of all the Quraishites, some Muhammadan authors assert that he formed the Quraishite tribe, and that they do this in order to raise the authority of Muhammad.

surnamed 'Quraish'), the son of Mālik, the son of Al Nazr, the son of Kināna, the son of Khuzaima, the son of Mudrika, the son of Alyās, the son of Muzir, the son of Nazār, the son of Ma'dd, the son of 'Adnān.\* In this genealogy (that is, the one between Muḥammad and 'Adnān) Sprenger tells us all the Muḥammadan genealogists agree.† The Arabians themselves confess that from 'Adnān to Ishmael the genealogy of the Quraishites is involved in fable.‡ That the pedigree of the tribe to which Muḥammad appertained cannot be traced further back than this man is confirmed by no less an authority than Muḥammad himself,§ who never traced his pedigree beyond him, and discouraged his followers from attempting to do so. He declared himself not cognizant of anything connected with the matter beyond that point, and even went so far as to declare that all those who traced his genealogy further back were guilty of fabrication and falsehood:—'Beyond 'Adnān,' said he, 'none but the Lord knoweth, and the genealogists lie.' Of course, the Muslim will contend that the genealogists to whom Muḥammad here alludes must have been either Jewish or Christian ones, for he will never admit that any of his ecclesiastical authorities could have been described in language of this sort by him whom they regarded as an infallible prophet. We shall see presently how much this contention is worth. And we content ourselves in the meantime by noting the very distinct and solemn asseveration of Muḥammad

That he really did so, however, is contradicted by all good authors: in fact, previous to the time of Qussai (the fifth ancestor of Muḥammad; in other words, the grandfather of Hāshim) most of the Quraishite families were called 'Banī Nazr.' Sprenger's opinion is that Fihir was 'certainly not a real person,' and that the Quraishites (who consisted exclusively of Kināna families) called themselves the 'Banī Fihir' simply as a symbol of their unity.—Sprenger, *Life of Muḥammad*, 19.

\* Osborn, *Islām under the Arabs*, 73; Anon., *Four Treatises concerning the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Mahometans*, 11 (edn. Lond. 1712).

† Sprenger, *Life of Mohammed*, 57. Cnf. for confirmation, Syed Ahmed Khan, *Pedigree of Mohammed*, 6.

‡ Mills, *History of Mohammedanism*, 7. Cnf. Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 6, 7; Pocock, *Specimen*, 40.

§ Sprenger, *Life of Muḥammad*, 57.

regarding the point in the terms just quoted. 'Beyond 'Adnân none but the Lord knoweth,' is language which we submit includes not only genealogists of the Jewish and Christian faiths, but Muslim ones as well.

Notwithstanding, however, the prohibitory tone of Muḥammad's language as to the valuelessness and treacherousness of Muslim traditions in regard to this point prior to the time of 'Adnân, the attempt has frequently been made by his adherents to follow up the pedigree through the twenty centuries or more that form the gulf reaching from 'Adnân back to Ishmael.\* Thus, some genealogists put eight fathers between these two ('Adnân and Ishmael);† others, thirty-eight;‡ while the Kâtibu'l-Wâqidi and other Arabian biographers of Muḥammad go even so far as to give a list of some forty names of heads of families 'beyond 'Adnân.'§ It is interesting to note the manner in which such lists were constructed. Even the historians themselves who made them, confess that they are mere appropriations and adaptations of Jewish genealogical lists found in the Old Testament. Thus, after giving one of these pretended genealogical trees leading up to Ishmael himself, the traditionist Tabari adds,—'This

\* Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 57. The connexion of 'Adnân with Ishmael is mainly 'ned, as might have been supposed, by the Wāḥḥābīs,—the strictest sect of the orthodox among Muḥammadans:—Cnf. Burckhardt, *Bedouins and Wahabys*, ii. 368 (edn. Lond. 1831).

† Their names are given by Ibn Is-ḥāq; thus,—Nabaioth, Yashjoh, Ya'rob, Zairah, Nahor, Muqawwin, Udad, Udd, 'Adnân. Cnf. Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 57 (note 3).

‡ Their names are thus given by Hishām Kalbī in Wāqidi;—Ishmael, Qaizār (Kedar), 'Awwām, 'Ūs, Mizzi, Shamī, Zāriḥ, Nahith, Moqṣī, Abhām, Aqnad, Aisar, Daishān, 'Aifi, Ara'wā, Yalḥan, Nakhzan, Sharbī, Sanbar, Hamdānī, Al Da'āmīr, 'Abqar, 'Aifi, Makhī, Nāḥish, Jāhim, Tābikh, Tadrān, Balā, Hazzā, Nāshid, Al 'Awwām, Ubai, Qanwāl, Būr, 'Ūs, Salāmān, Al Hamai'sā, Udad, 'Adnān. Dr. Sprenger is of opinion that this list was furnished by Jews:—Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 57 (note 4). Cnf. the *Kitāb-ul-Aghani* (edn. Koseg.) 12, and Syed Ahmed Khan, *Pedigree of Mohammed*, 5.

§ Syed Ahmed Khan, *Pedigree of Mohammed*, 10.

is an ancient tradition *taken from one of the former books*,—that is, from the records of the Jews as found in the Old Testament.\*

It is worthy of note that those portions of the Qur'an that are most occupied with Jewish legends were not written till after the Hajira,—the period during which some of the Jews of southern Arabia apostatized from their ancestral faith, and joined the new religion. These sought—and successfully too—to flatter the vanity of their new master by confirming the notion of the Abrahamic origin of the Arab races, and of the Ka'ba and its religion and associations. The custom of borrowing from the Jewish Scriptures the genealogies beyond 'Adnân is without doubt attributable to the sycophancy of these perverts. The varying uses which this class of his adherents made of tradition generally, would have occasioned Muḥammad some embarrassment if his historical knowledge had been equal to his religious fervour. Thus, some of the Madîna converts, themselves descendants of Qahtân, maintained that this was the same person as the Joktân of the Old Testament—GEN. x. 25. They actually invented a genealogical tree for the purpose of proving this, and they argued that inasmuch as this man was descended from Ishmael, they too, no less than Muḥammad, were descendants of his.† This position quietly ignored all the difficulties of the case. In the first place, it involved the anachronism that Joktân, who lived long prior to Ishmael, was among Ishmael's posterity; and it involved the geographical difficulty that whereas it is beyond question that Qahtân and his descendants inhabited southern Arabia, the writer of the Book of GENESIS represents Joktân as settling in the north. Forster, in his exceedingly erudite work, argues that the Joktanite Sabeans were a different

\* Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. p. cvii; Tabarî, p. 52. Cnf. Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 57 (note 4).

† Wâqidî, 262½; Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 39; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. pp. cviii, cxlviii—cl, clxx; Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 454-5; ii. 240, 241, 256; Wolff, *Travels and Adventures*, 474 (edn. Lond. 1861); Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 8, 9.

race of people from the Joktanite Badawîs, and that it was these latter that were descended from the Qahtân of Arabian history.\* Similarly embarrassing to him would have been the opinion of certain other adherents of his, who maintained that inasmuch as Qahtân was a descendant of Ishmael's, Qahtân could have been no connexion of Joktân's who lived so long prior to Ishmael. If they were but descended from Ishmael, they too belonged to the favoured line with which identity was claimed for their new leader.

That Joktân and his descendants occupied part of southern Arabia is not disputed, and seems inferrible from GEN. x. 30,—

'Their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto  
Sephâr, a mount of the East.'

The difficulty is that no successful attempt has yet been made to identify these places. Forster seeks to identify them with places in the province of Najd, to the north-east of Makka, but he does it by a species of philological manipulation which does not carry conviction.† But, as Muir says, the *direction* in which they colonized is indicated clearly enough. The Ishmaelites and the Joktânites were of the same original stock, being both of them descended from Shem. But the former were descended not from Joktân, but from his brother Peleg, as will be seen by comparing GEN. x. 25 with GEN. xi. 18,—

And unto Eber were born two sons,—the name of one  
was Peleg,‡ and his brother's name was Joktân.'——  
'And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu';—from  
whom, in course of time, came the father of Ishmael.

In the absence of real and authentic history, it is in the highest degree unsafe to argue the direct descent of Qahtân from Joktân from the mere resemblance of the names. But that these two

\* Forster, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, i. 34.

† Forster, *Hist. Geog.* i. 77 seqq.; Rosenmüller, *Biblical Geography*, iii. 298; Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 40; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. pp. cx, cxxiii, clii.

‡ 'Peleg':—The word signifies 'division,' and may indicate that the separation of the human race into distinct tribes and nations, according to ch. xi, probably took place about the time of his birth.

were one and the same person is for those who build upon it a most treacherous anachronism, for while the latter lived long prior to Ishmael, the former is proved to have lived as lately as between the ninth and the sixth centuries before the Christian æra. There is literally not a tittle of evidence to shew that these two persons were one and the same. The periods of their respective existence stretch across a gulf of some fourteen centuries, during which the genealogical connexion is lost in impenetrable darkness. Whether there was any such connexion between them is a question which, from all we can discover, has hitherto baffled all investigation, and must probably be given up as having passed into the region of the unknowable. For the purpose of the present controversy, therefore, it is all the same whether we affirm the connexion or whether we deny it.

As already remarked, beyond the period of 'Adnân the Muslim traditions as to the ancestry of Muḥammad are valueless. They are, by the admission of the Arabian historians themselves, mere appropriations of Jewish genealogies as found in our Scriptures. Some of them go even so far as to assert that if the ancestry of Muḥammad could possibly have been traced to any one 'beyond 'Adnân,' he at least would not have been so ignorant of such a circumstance as to have denied it, nor have so emphatically discouraged the attempts of his followers to pursue the subject any further. Such was the view held by no less an authority than Al Wâqidi, who thus alludes to the point:—'I have met with no difference of opinion in respect of Ma'dd being of the offspring of Qaydar, son of Ishmael. But this discrepancy in the genealogy between them gives proof that the genealogy has not been preserved, but has been taken from the Jews. And they have translated it unto them, and they have differed therein. And if this genealogy had been really correct, as shewing the pedigree between 'Adnân and Ishmael, then the prophet of the Lord had been better acquainted with it than any other person. So my conclusion is that the genealogical detail ends with

'Adnân, and that we must hold back from anything beyond that till we reach Ishmael the son of Abraham.\* Here the learned historian plainly admits that the genealogical lists 'beyond' Adnân were in all instances borrowed from Jewish sources. (over)

Gibbon, whom no Muslim will suspect of undue leaning to the Christian view of the controversy, embodies his opinion in a few decisive words. After intimating that his not being a sojourner at Makka left him more free to speak the truth,† he says that from Ishmael to Muḥammad, a period of two thousand five hundred years, the genealogy which meets with the approval of Muslims reckons only thirty generations instead of seventy-five.‡ This is a very fair specimen of the easy way in which Muḥammadan controversialists canter over historical difficulties, and shews that what Gibbon says of the modern Badawīs is equally true of their more civilized co-religionists both in former and more recent times,—that they are 'ignorant of their history and careless of their pedigree.' As Sayyid Aḥmad Khān has placed on record an emphatic expression of his admiration for the historian of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and of his 'lasting esteem' for him, it would be interesting to know how the Maulvi would meet the latter part of this most damaging indictment. The historian adds the opinion that the first steps of the

\* Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. p. xciii.

† Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 909 (note S). On this point the reader may gain further conviction by reading such works as those of Burckhardt, Burton, and Palgrave.

‡ Cnf. Morgan, *Mahometanism Explained*, i. 257 (edn. Lond. 1723). This work was first written in the Spanish language in the year 1603. The author of it was an Arragonian Moor, named Mahomet Rabadan, who interspersed his work with Arabic, and designed it for the instruction of his Morisco co-religionists, then in Spain. It was translated into English by Mr. Joseph Morgan from the original manuscript which he found in the library of the Earl of Oxford. The text of the work is illustrated with many learned notes, which have been added by the Translator. There are several mistakes in it in points of minute detail, but the evident simplicity of purpose on the part of the author of the original, commends it to the judgment of the reader as a bonâ-fide representation of Muḥammadan dogma. The work was largely drawn upon by so high an authority as Sale; and with all its quaintness and antiquity, it bears every mark of trustworthiness. 7



pedigree of the ancestors of Muḥammad are 'dark and doubtful,' and that the dogma of 'the descent from Ishmael was but a national privilege or fable.\* *to be = Rahman's father*

It is well to have from Islāmic sources whatever arguments can be adduced in regard to this or any other subject connected with the claims of Muḥammad. But we are bound to say that the question of Muḥammad's descent from Ishmael has not been satisfactorily treated in the latest utterance of a Muḥammadan in regard to it. The purpose of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān in his Essay on the *Pedigree of Mohammed*, was to exhibit to the world the steps by which he would prove his own descent from Muḥammad and from Ishmael. This he tells us in the following words:— 'We shall subjoin to this a genealogical Table of our Prophet up to Adnan, together with its various branches and offsets (*sic*) into which it was divided in course of time. As the author can pride himself in being a descendant of one of those offshoots, he deems it his greatest honour to give his own genealogy along with that of the Prophet.' In other words, his primary object was to place beyond controversy for ever a matter which 'the chief of the prophets,'—himself a man whom the Maulvī believes to have been inspired and infallible,—declared was known to 'the Lord alone;' and to settle also, incidentally and subordinately of course, a little question of blood in which he was personally interested.

It ought here to be noted that the Maulvī belongs to a school of thinkers who hold, in effect, pretty much the same position among Muslims that so-called 'Rationalists' hold among Christians; that is to say, they maintain that credulity is the handmaid of orthodoxy, and that the orthodox do not exercise their reason. There are many things believed by his coreligionists to be authoritative which he does not accept. The generality of them consequently deem him heterodox. We find no fault with him for differing with his brethren. We merely mention the circumstance because it accounts for his rejection

\* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 909 (ch. 50).

of those <sup>^</sup>traditionary writings upon which his co-religionists set such high value. Those writings, in fact, militate against the point he aims at making. This will account for his rejection of the tradition of Wāqidi, who, as we have seen, relates that Muhammad gave up as insolvable the question of his descent from Ishmael. The traditionist does not describe Muḥammad as denying such descent, but merely as charging certain of his adherents with attempting a useless task, in the execution of which they were guilty of malversation and sycophancy.

<sup>10064</sup> It is quite curious to observe how the Maulvī admits the truth of that part of the sentence which he finds to be necessary for his own purpose, and utterly rejects the other part which tells against it. 'None but the Lord knoweth' is a statement the falsehood of which he considers he has proved; 'the genealogists lie' is phraseology the truth of which he believes he has established by many quotations. Thus, on p. 3 he quotes some traditions of the ancient Muslim historians, Wāqidi, Masa'ūdī, and Abu'l-Fida; and he adds, with a simplicity which unhappily is rarely found in other parts of his treatise,—'All the above-mentioned traditions have no authority for the proof of their genuineness, and are not entitled to the least particle of credit!' The traditions to which he refers are not, be it observed, the fabrications of Jews or Christians; they are the *bonâ-fide* contributions of scholars who were themselves adherents of the Maulvī's own faith. A yet more remarkable instance of the erroneousness and falsehood of his co-religionists is given by the Maulvī on p. 4, where, after citing several Muḥammadan authors whose aim it was to prove the very point which he himself seeks to establish—namely, the descent of Muḥammad from Ishmael or Abraham, he remarks with wonderful ingenuousness,—'All the above-mentioned genealogies are entirely wrong!' Seeing that it is impossible for him to call in question the accuracy of Sir William Muir's quotations, he impugns his authorities. This is an easy way of disposing of difficulties, and one to which no Muḥammadan

is ashamed to have recourse. To silence an opponent, by whatever means, affords to him the same satisfaction as is afforded to some men when they achieve a triumph in the domain of truth,—a distinction which, from all that appears, it has not been given to the Muslim to appreciate. If the writers of whom he thus speaks were Christians or Jews, there would be nothing surprising in his thus setting them down; but he here impugns the accuracy or the veracity of such men as Baihâkî, Ibnî Hishâm, and Ibnî Arabî! It is thus clear that the opinion of the Maulvî regarding the veracity of the genealogists, agrees with that attributed by Wâqidî to Muḥammad;—‘the genealogists lie!’ What wonder if the followers of Moses and of Jesus see no better reason than the Maulvî does for accepting without interrogation all that tradition has attributed to Muḥammad!

But then, the agreement of the Maulvî with Muḥammad does not go the whole way. In his endeavour to establish his dogma, he pursues a course which leaves the reader under the impression that the ‘lying’ was not confined to the genealogists. If Wâqidî was right, Muḥammad was wrong! Of the two evils, the Maulvî, like a shrewd man who means to make the best of both worlds, chooses the lesser. But just at this point comes a fact for which the reader will hardly be prepared;—the Maulvî grounds his genealogical adventure upon the writings of a man who belongs to that very class whom he has already proscribed as either inaccurate or mendacious! But he deftly conceals this interesting circumstance by not stating that the tradition regarding the Secretary of Jeremiah is a tradition of Tabarî’s.\* It is very convenient, the Maulvî finds, to use a genealogical list which he says was that of Barukh (Abrakhia) the Secretary of the prophet Jeremiah. It will be a piece of news to many a Jew and Christian that this afflicted and outcast prophet had a Secretary; for everyone will, of course, agree that if the sayings of the prophet were not left on record by himself, they must have been

\* Tabarî, 53; Kâtibu’l-Wâqidî, 9; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i, cvii-viii.

written by some contemporary of his. The Maulvi, as we shall presently see, adopts the opinion that Jeremiah and Barukh were contemporaries and companions. He grounds his case on two things,—this genealogical list, and a local tradition relating to Makka.

The information regarding the list is given by Tabarî. He says,—“Hishâm bin Muḥammad related as follows—‘There was a man of Tadmor,\* called Abû Yâkûb bin Maslama, of the Children of Israel. He used to read in the Jewish books, and was versed in their traditional learning. Now, this man mentioned that Barukh bin Baria, the scribe of Eremia, proved the genealogy of Ma’dḍ, son of ‘Adnân, and placed it on its proper basis, and wrote it out. And this genealogy is well known amongst the Doctors of the People of the Book as being certified in their books.’ Now, it closely approaches the foregoing list of names; and whatever differences there are between them arise from the difference of language,—their names being translated from the Hebrew.”† The ‘People of the Book’ here alluded to are the Jews. In regard to the closing words of this quotation it has to be noted that ancient genealogies with strange names are not unfrequently referred to individuals known in the Old Testament under different names.‡ The evidence of this passage is in entire accord with the statement of Sir William Muir and other Christian writers—namely, that the Muslim traditionists who, contrary to the admonition of their prophet, ventured to trace his Ishmaelitic descent ‘beyond ‘Adnân,’ utilized for their purpose the genealogical lists of the Jews given in the Old Testament.§

\* Tadmor=Palmyra, one of the wealthy mercantile cities of ancient Arabia. The reader will find an interesting account of this place (at one period the rival even of Rome itself) in Smith’s *Classical Dictionary* (edn. Lond. 1858), s. v. PALMYRA. Cf. Sprenger, *Life of Mohammâd*, 32-3. A

† Tabarî, 53; Al Wâqidî, 9; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. p. cvii.

‡ See, for example, Tabarî, 51; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. p. cviii.

§ Dr. Sprenger points out that many examples of the practice of Arabs in resorting to the Jews of the Hijâz for information respecting religion and history,

This is a mere statement of fact, and is not necessarily mixed up with any religious prepossession. Indeed the Maulvī himself denies, as we have seen, the veracity of all genealogical lists excepting the single one that cōincides with his own preconceived view.

But the Maulvī connects with the evidence purporting to be from Jeremiah's Secretary, a local tradition of Makka; and it is on these two grounds that he bases the theory and its issues. He says,—‘This tradition maintains that Nebuchadnezzar attacked Arabia, and having routed Adnan and the Jorhamites, devastated Mecca, and carried off to Babylon multitudes of captives. But God protected Adnan's son, Moid, whom, in compliance with the divine commands, Jeremiah and Abrakhia took with them and brought up, in security, in the land of Harran. Now the prophet Jeremiah flourished in the thirty-fifth century A. M., or the sixth century A. C., and according to the general course of generations, Moid lived also at the same time, and therefore, according to this calculation, the local tradition above-mentioned and the historical work of Abrakhia singularly cōincide, as far as facts are concerned.’\*

A careful perusal of Tabari's tradition regarding Barukh will shew that it is based on hearsay, like so many of the other traditions that floated about in the conversation of the Arabians. The list ascribed to Jeremiah's Secretary is not a new discovery of the Maulvī's,—it dates as far back as Tabari at least. The fault in the Maulvī's superstructure is that it rests on a most fatal anachronism. Between Muḥammad and 'Adnān there is an ascertained interval of only eighteen generations; so that, by careful calculation, the birth of 'Adnān cannot be assigned to an earlier date than 130 B.C., while the ravages of Nebuchadnezzar's

are mentioned by the historian Ibn Is-hāq. The form of names will sometimes point to the source of information. The name of Abraham, for instance, was in Yamar pronounced ‘Abrahah,’ and by the Jews of Madīna ‘Ibrāhīm,’—the form most common in the Qur'ān. Cnf. Sprenger, *Life of Mohammod*, 53.

\* Syed Ahmed Khan, *Pedigree of Mohammed*, 7.

army occurred in B.C. 572.\* In other words, whereas the list purporting to be that of Jeremiah's Secretary brings down the genealogy to as far as Ma'dd who lived less than a century before Christ, the prophet Jeremiah lived five centuries earlier. The Maulvî perceives the snare, and seeks to avoid it by putting back the time of the son of 'Adnân to the time of Jeremiah! 'Thus,' says Sir William Muir, 'even in events comparatively modern, legend spurns the limitations of reason and chronology.' The Maulvî has simply nothing to guide him in the ascertainment of the authenticity and accuracy of the list, excepting his own cherished prepossession. He is anxious that it should be a generally understood thing, that his ancestry can be traced up to Ishmael. In comparison with this, a matter of five hundred years so long ago is a matter that can easily be settled by making the son of a man who lived a century before Christ be a contemporary of a man who lived five centuries earlier! He has nothing by which he can ascertain whether the names are the names of real persons or imaginary ones, or whether they are mutilated forms of names found in the genealogies of the Jews, or even whether the list upon which he grounds his cherished belief is a genuine and authentic one.

That the list purporting to have been written by Barukh was not prepared with the view of tracing out the posterity of Ishmael, is shewn in the tradition itself,—'This genealogy is well known among the Doctors of the People of the Book as being certified in their Books.' It should be a very simple matter indeed for the Maulvî to point out where in the records of the Jews this list is 'certified.' The Maulvî has a foregone conclusion bolster up: the list happens, with a little manipulation of dates, to meet his purpose: this is sufficient: the wish is father to the thought: all writers, ancient or modern, Muḥammadan or Christian, who do not feel convinced that the Maulvî's super-

\* Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cxciv; Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Various Religions of the Pre-Islamic Arabs*, 11.

structure is well-grounded, he sets down as either 'ignorant' or 'bigotted.' In dogmatizing regarding the genealogy beyond 'Adnân' he is not unaware of the fact that he is busying himself to prove that 'the chief of the prophets' was guilty of falsehood. In maintaining his particular theory as to the descent of Muḥammad from Ishmael, the Maulvî not only goes in the teeth of the authority of the founder of his religion, but also of all who have ever investigated the matter. We note with regret the instructive fact that his knowledge of the Arabic language and his relationship to Muḥammad have not the effect of straightening out his logic, any more than they have of investing his reasoning faculties with any new authority. His ideas of fairness do not rise above those of the typical and traditional Muslim, with whose most singular feats of intellect we have long been familiar. The simple truth is that attention to the details of real history is not a strong point with the Muḥammadan,—he figures best in subjects affording scope for the exercise of the imagination. Chronology is a particularly weak point with him; and hence, according to one of his traditions there were but eighteen generations between Adam and 'Adnân\* A more intelligent apprehension of facts was formed, however, by two of the leading Muslim historians, Al Wâqidî and Al Tabarî, who, whatever may be the defects of their writings in regard to other points, were evidently not disposed to so far sacrifice their common sense to popular favour as to give their imprimatur to so manifestly false a statement;—they maintained that there were forty generations between Ishmael and 'Adnân,—which even Khaldûn, confirmed by Mons. de Percival,† thinks too small a number.

\* Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 344.

† The authority of this writer is of great weight. He made this particular question of Arabian genealogy a subject of special investigation, and has given the result of incredible labour in the Tables at the end of his first volume. In all his labours on the entangled and delicate subject of the History of the Arabian Races, the name of de Percival is a guarantee for an assiduity and dispassionateness that have seldom been equalled, and never surpassed. —

If the descent of Muḥammad from Ishmael is, after all that he himself was wont to say to the contrary, a question so easily disposed of as the Maulvī appears to think, it is indeed passing strange that he at so late a period should have been the first to discover it. It is obvious that he felt that his position was open to criticism of this kind, for he affirms at the commencement of his Essay, that the Arabs were a people who had no literature, and who were dependent for their history and genealogies solely upon traditions committed to memory by successive generations. And he gives practical proof of his want of faith in the statements of his co-religionists in Arabia in the summary and wholesale way in which he declares them to be 'incredible' and 'false.' All this he does in order to make way for his own theory, and for the purpose of obtaining popular credence for a statement the gist of which is to hold up to our view his own descent from Ishmael, but which goes on the assumption that a matter which proved too difficult for even 'the greatest of all the prophets' and for all the ancient authorities in Arabia to settle, has at length been brought within the realm of absolute certainty by one of Muḥammad's own followers as lately as in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

A few remarks in reference to the sources whose authority the Maulvī accepts in support of his case may bring this part of our subject to a close. He has not told us what motive a Jew, as the Secretary must be supposed to have been, could have had in drawing up a most elaborate and exact list of the descendants of Ishmael, and to exactly that point of time which was needed for the Maulvī's exigency; or what special means he had of ascertaining the facts essential to the preparation of such a list. Jews have not been wont to devote their resources to the elaboration of materials to prove the Abrahamic descent of their ancient and unceasing enemies. The antipathy that exists between the seed of Ishmael and of Isaac is one of the best-known facts of history; yet the Maulvī expects Jews to believe that one of



their number was at the pains to actually elaborate a list extending over a period of some two thousand years, the object of which was to establish the genealogical connexion of the race of Ishmael,—this list embracing one of the darkest, most inscrutable, and bewildering periods of Arabian history. It was dark religiously, for the Arabian races were then sunk in the most dreary idolatry and fetichism; it was dark educationally, for, as the Maulvī tells us, they had ‘no literature;’ and it was dark genealogically, for, in addition to the statement already quoted from the lips of Muḥammad, out of all the lists of their pedigree, there is but one which even the Maulvī himself admits, and that list was prepared by a member of another and a hostile nation whose historical claims were so well assured as not to stand in any need of revision or support. The advocate of Islām will of course contend for the necessary corollary—namely, that if Jews and Christians accept, as they do, the statements of the compiler of Jeremiah’s writings in reference to other matters, they are bound to accept also his statements in this genealogical list: to all men, excepting the Maulvī the converse also will be true,—that the Maulvī is bound to accept the same Jewish authorities in all other matters no less than in this single one. It clearly is much more to the Muḥammadan’s purpose to gather evidence on such points from Jewish or Christian sources than from Islāmic ones; for in addition to the fact that evidence drawn from sources in Arabia dating prior to Muḥammad’s time, is valueless owing to the illiterate condition of the Arabs and the unhistorical nature of their legends, it has all the effect of incidental evidence drawn from parties prejudiced in favour of the opposite side,—or, as the Maulvī would express it, from ‘unwilling witnesses.’ It is indeed passing strange that when a Jew quotes in support of the claims of the posterity of Isaac those writings which he reveres as inspired of God, the Muḥammadan charges him and his co-religionists with altering the text of their Scriptures in order to invalidate the claims of the Ishmaelitic branch; and yet when

a genealogical list is quoted purporting to be compiled by a Jew but aiming at supplying a list of names which meets the Muḥammadan's prepossession, all suspicion of foul play disappears at once.

The other source of evidence on which the Maulvī draws is a local tradition in connexion with Makka. It is surprising how any man born in the East should fail to estimate at its true worth a mere local tradition; yet one meets *ad nauseam* in the pages of this writer allusions to 'local traditions' in that country which had 'no literature,' and theories of the most important nature gravely based on such cock-and-bull traditions.\* Nor is there anything in the mere local traditions of Arabia that entitles them to exemption from suspicion. No one knows better than the Maulvī does, that the wildest stories imaginable are told both in connexion with Makka and in connexion with Sana'a, Madīna, and other places in Arabia,—stories that could never for a moment be seriously credited by any dispassionate man. But a drowning man will snatch at a razor. In other portions of his work, when he finds these 'local traditions' inconvenient, the Maulvī sets no value at all upon them: when they happen to militate against the point he seeks to establish, he sets them aside as of no worth and speaks of them as 'merely local traditions' 'unworthy of credence!' How could he have expressed more strongly his distrust of them?† But in the present instance, this particular local tradition is very convenient for the Maulvī's purpose. It serves to account for the way in which the information came to be associated with the city, and it links the very information that was wanted to the very point where the weakness of the case was felt. It is indeed remarkable with what avidity Muslim controversialists avail themselves of evidence drawn from professedly Jewish and Christian sources when that evidence happens to suit their purpose. They even quote the Bible when

\* Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, iii. pp. cxliv, cxlv.

† Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Historical Geography of Arabia*, 71, 73.

it suits their purpose to do so; and when it does not, they boldly maintain that the text of that Book must have been tampered with through the sacriligious villainy of Jews and Christians. That a man should be enamoured, as the Maulvî obviously is, of his ancestral religion, is a matter that all men can easily understand; but such disingenuous treatment of documentary evidence is surely a sign of the suspension of the reasoning faculty.

The drift of the Maulvî's treatise is to make out the Ishmaelitic origin of the Quraish, of which tribe Muḥammad was a member, and consequently his own membership of that particular tribe. In doing this he is too apt to let his religious animus blind him regarding the merits and defects of other men. Thus, when he cites Abu'l-Fida and other writers who are co-religionists of his own, he does so with approval even though they agree with Muḥammad as to the impossibility of tracing his descent 'beyond 'Adnân;' and yet when Sir William Muir does the very same thing, the Maulvî treats his statements with disrespect. Even when Gibbon goes in fact no further than the others, the Maulvî cites him too with approval; and he does so for the sake of the following sentence of his, 'The base and plebeian origin of Mahomet is an unskilful calumny of the Christians\* who exalt, instead of degrading the merit of their adversary.' This sentence does not sustain Gibbon's reputation for common accuracy,—to ascend no higher. There is not so much truth as there might seem to be in the insinuation he here makes against Christians. Prideaux, Reland, and Pocock, among others who might be named, wrote on the subject before Gibbon's time: he must have

\* An apology is due to the 'P. D.' for this departure from the canon of his profession in regard to words of this class. In writing the words 'Jew,' 'Mahometan,' Gibbon uniformly begins them with a capital letter, but when he has to write the word 'Christian' he begins it with a small c. The printer's rule seems to have had its foundation in reason, and taste, and moral decency: Gibbon appears to go out of his way to hurl defiance at that rule. It is not easy to reconcile the conduct of the great historian in this matter with his pretension to disinterestedness. It would have relieved him of the suspicion of a fanatical aversion to Christ if he had specified on what literary principle he made the distinction.

been aware of the published statements of these men, for he quotes largely from their books. The profound learning which they brought to the work cannot be called in question; yet they all of them agree in describing Muḥammad as a Quraishite of Hashimite descent.\* Gibbon may have had in mind other men than these; yet these we have named were representative men, and they were Christians. The point we are concerned to note is that Gibbon (who is generally, but with surprising error, looked upon as an impartial authority in religious questions) is quite commonly regarded as having been the first of English writers to do justice to the question of Muḥammad's descent! His ignoring of the statements made on this subject by the Christian scholars we have mentioned, suggests a doubt whether the rejection of the supreme authority of Jesus as a sovereign remedy for untruthfulness, dishonesty, and prejudice.

To return, however, to Sayyid Aḥmad, who seems to have fallen completely into the trap. In gratitude to Gibbon for this precious morsel, the Maulvī calls him an 'accomplished historian,' and says that he will 'ever hold his talents in high respect and esteem.' But Gibbon might have spared himself the indignity of charging this upon Christian scholars, for the opinion as to the low extraction of Muḥammad has even been advocated by some of the Maulvī's co-religionists, and they have done so for the purpose of raising his reputation and establishing his celebrity. But it unfortunately happens that in his eagerness to discover in English authors—whom, apparently, he imagines to be *ipso facto* Christians—corroboration of his religious prepossessions, the Maulvī, in the case of Gibbon, not only swallows the bait, but also the hook,—which Gibbon with his usual dexterity conceals. Gibbon's rap at Christian writers was too tempting a bit for the Maulvī; so he goes in for it. But then, he quotes too much, and actually cites the next sentence in which Gibbon embodies

\* Prideaux, *Life of Mahomet*, 1—3; Pocock, *Specimen*, 52; Anon. *Life of Mahomet*, 11.

his contempt for that very Ishmaelitic origin of Muḥammad for which the Maulvī contends! Thus, he says,—‘His descent from Ishmael was a national privilege or *fable*; but if the first steps of the pedigree are dark and doubtful, he could produce many generations of pure and genuine nobility.’\* It is a remarkable proof of that blindness of which we have spoken, that the Maulvī stands alone, as far as we have been able to ascertain, in the failure to apprehend the covert sneer in which Gibbon here indulges regarding the Ishmaelitic descent of Muḥammad. He bows respectfully to Gibbon in grateful acknowledgment of an allusion so ingeniously worded that he does not detect the cheat; yet he has nothing but sneers for a man like Forster, who devotes much learning to prove the very point which the Maulvī seek to establish, and to expose the fallacy of Gibbon’s insinuation. As the Maulvī is evidently possessed of the conviction that it is impossible for a Christian man to deal honestly with Islāmic subjects, we venture to commend to his candid perusal the masterly and conclusive argument of the Christian divine against the sceptical historian. The Maulvī cannot shelter himself behind the plea that Gibbon says that Muḥammad was a scion of the Quraishite tribe, for every Christian writer says the same. But where does Gibbon concede the point which the Maulvī seeks to establish—*viz.* that Muḥammad was an Ishmaelite? The language of Gibbon in this place is described by Forster as ‘an open sneer at the Ishmaelic descent’ of the Arabs! And that Forster is right in his interpretation of Gibbon’s language is shewn in other parts of Gibbon’s History which the Maulvī would seem to have overlooked.† Nor, we believe, did any man ever express a stronger opinion in regard to the question whether Muḥammad was an impostor or not, than did the writer whom the Maulvī thus singles out for grateful commendation. Witness the statement of Gibbon, in that same chapter, that the Kalima of Islām

\* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 109 (ch. 50).

† Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 384-5.

contains 'an eternal truth, and a necessary fiction,'—'THERE IS NO DEITY BUT ALLÂH, and Muḥammad is the Ambâssador of Allâh!' He thus expresses in most unmistakable language, his contempt for the distinguishing tenet of the Muḥammadan religion. In another place Gibbon speaks of 'the fanaticism of the Koran!'<sup>\*</sup> In the presence of such facts there is something like irony in the Maulvî giving in his adhesion to the man who speaks of the latter part of the Kalima as 'a necessary fiction' as being a person 'whose authority cannot be doubted or even questioned!'<sup>†</sup> It is a signal instance of a psychological phenomenon often discovered in men who are over-eager to adduce weighty authority in favour of their peculiar views,—the putting forward as corroborative evidence what tends in exactly the other direction.

It is generally asserted by Muslims that the Christians who write adversely to Muḥammadanism are ministers of the Gospel; that, in other words, they are men who have a professional interest in the decadence of the system; and that when the writers happen to be 'laymen' their views are more favourable to Islâm. How far this is from being the fact the reader will see if he will study what they have all of them said, from Sale to Stobart,—including such men as Gibbon, Carlyle, and Washington Irving.<sup>‡</sup> It will not meet this if the apologists of Islâm merely select a sentence here and there from these writers to shew that our observation is not correct, for we could select exactly similar sentences from the writings of Christian divines. Burton, who has never been suspected of a fanatical bias in favour of the religion of Christ,

<sup>\*</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, II 168 (ch. lxiv).

<sup>†</sup> Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the question—Whether Islam has been Beneficial or Injurious to Human Society in General, and to the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations*, p. 34.

<sup>‡</sup> The reader who is in doubt on this point may consult, for proof, Sale, *To the Reader*, v, vi; *Life of George Sale*, xi; *Prel. Disc.* 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 86-7, and many other places. The expressions of contempt regarding the whole matter of the Qur'ân and the pretensions of Muḥammad, in which Carlyle indulges are almost violent,—exceeding, in this respect, anything that can be found in the well-abused writings of Dean Prideaux.

says,—‘Nothing is more remarkable in the annals of the Arabs than their efforts to prove the Ishmaelitic descent of Mohammed; at the same time, no historic question is more open to doubt or more difficult to prove.’\* As to the question of the descent of Sayyid Ahmad Khān from Muḥammad, we have no desire to dispute with him a single moment. But we protest, in the name of common sense, against the notion that such a connexion adds any weight to his reasoning. That must stand or fall according to its own merits. His quotation from Gibbon is made only too obviously for the purpose of discrediting the advocates of Christianity; for writers who have studied Islām from the Christian standpoint since the time of Gibbon, have but little sympathy with the kind of writing to which Gibbon refers. It would be ridiculous to suppose that the Maulvī is so misinformed regarding the literature of the other side, as not to have been aware of this fact when he quoted so approvingly from Gibbon. And yet he quotes Gibbon as if Gibbon’s rash assertion were still true! Whatever may have been his intention in making the quotation, the quotation amounts simply to this,—that Muḥammad was of Quraishite extraction. We are not aware that any party to the controversy has the least interest in questioning this fact; and we fail to see the motive for which the quotation is made unless it arose from an anxiety on the Maulvī’s part to impress his fellowmen with the important circumstance that he was himself a Quraishite of the stock of Abraham.

The Maulvī’s way of setting down ‘many Christian writers,’ among whom the chief offender appears to be Sir William Muir, as having ‘wasted their time and misapplied their talents in a useless search after’ a mare’s nest,† is in perfect keeping with the

\* Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 124 (cnf. i. 215).

† The said ‘mare’s nest’ consisting in the connexion between Islām and Judaism,—a connexion ‘which,’ the Maulvī tells us (p. 9), ‘no Mohammedan ever attempted to deny.’ On p. 11 we are treated to the following remarkable outburst;—‘Sir William Muir alone stands against the unanimous opinion of the learned, and by his gratuitous conjectures contradicts the most glaring facts,

eccentricity of genius which is, only too evidently, part of the breeding of every genuine Muḥammadan. Inasmuch as Sir William Muir, while conceding the *probability* of the descent of Muḥammad from Ishmael, is unable to trace out the steps of the relationship in a manner satisfactory to his own mind, he comes in for a goodly share of that species of argument which the followers of Muḥammad know so well how to apply to all who are not able to agree with them. But any one who will carefully study the details will see how utterly uncalled-for is the treatment the Maulvi metes out to Sir William Muir's contribution to the literature of the subject. That treatment is, in fact, both irrational and undignified. Thus, on p. 9 he quotes him approvingly in one paragraph, and begins the next in terms which imply disapproval of that very statement; and then he proceeds to give us his own opinion,—which turns out to be nothing more nor less than the opinion of Sir William Muir dressed up in other terms! The passage runs thus:—"Sir William Muir is perfectly right in remarking that 'this is clear admission that, up to Adnan, Mohammed's genealogy is native, that is, derived from indigenous Arabian traditions, but, beyond Adnan, that it has been borrowed from the Jews.' We are, however, of opinion that, up to Adnan, the forty-first in our list, the genealogy of the Prophet is derived from pure Arabian tradition, and that, from Adnan upwards, it is taken from Jewish history." If this is not precisely the same statement expressed in other terms, we know not what it is. The reader will judge for himself. It appears to us that the Maulvi here gives in his adhesion to the very sentiment which it is the express object of his treatise to refute! باطل نہ! •

unquestionably proved by history, both sacred and profane.' The distinguished scholar thus assailed can well afford to leave himself to the judgment of his readers: but what would the Muḥammadan historian Tabari, the Maulvi's own authority, say to such a deliverance! Such a tissue of mistakes leaves analysis and criticism *hors de combat*, and we merely cite the sentence as a sample of what history comes to be when it tumbles down into the hands of one who is so manifestly the subject of religious prepossession.



The slur which the Maulvî casts upon Christianity as not resting on a basis of its own, but as merely a continuation or development of Judaism, is in exact keeping with the views held by Christians: so also is his boast that Islâm 'stands upon a basis of its own.' In this instance, therefore, he is merely indulging in the harmless amusement of setting up a man-of-straw for the sake of the mild gratification of knocking it down again. No Christian or Jew ever doubted that the seed of Ishmael was distinct from the seed of Isaac. Happily Islâm *does*, as he says, rest upon a basis of its own. His assertion, moreover, that 'Mohammedans deem it their highest honour to be the true and faithful followers of every true and Divinely-commissioned Prophet' is just one of those inflated utterances that are but too characteristic of the adherents of Islâm. It is *verba et præterea nihil*. All Muḥammadans loudly protest their faith in Christ as 'a true and Divinely-commissioned Prophet:' in what sense are they His 'true and faithful followers?' Every Muḥammadan knows perfectly well that he is the follower of one man only. The Maulvî is welcome to his Ishmaelitic ancestry: the admission does us no harm, and the dogma does him no good: but we do not see that he has made out his case. Before he can do that, he must refute the arguments of some very thorough students, such as Sprenger, de Percival, and Muir, and, above all, he must establish the unsoundness of Muḥammad's own celebrated dictum in regard to the whole matter,—'Beyond 'Adnân none but the Lord knoweth; and the genealogists lie!'

It is evident that Muḥammad felt immeasurably less concerned about his descent than the Maulvî does, for he gives no light on the subject.) If he had felt any interest in it, he would rather have encouraged the search, and might even have obtained a special revelation placing the matter forever beyond the region of controversy, as he did in regard to certain other matters of wonderfully trivial importance. What ground of boasting the Maulvî has in the mere fact of descent from Ishmael, we are

wholly at a loss to conceive. We can only explain his condition of mind on the principle that he has allowed himself to be carried away by a mere love of the antiquated. If antiquity is in his judgment a thing to be proud of, he has only to go a little further back, and he will find that his genealogical line converges with our own, and ultimately leads up to a prying and pilfering couple whose exploits should make all rational men ashamed of their paternity, even the remotest. But the Maulvi need not go so far back in order to find cause for misgiving. A man who stands in the relation of consanguinity with those weird and misanthropic creatures, the Badawis of the Arabian Desert,—the true progeny of Ishmael,—has additional reason for being silent on the subject of genealogy. Since the time when his ancestors escaped the barbarity of these unhappy Desert-men, the Maulvi has experienced the elevating power of association with the outer world. Unlike his brethren, he has enjoyed the advantages of enlightenment and civilization. But we are sorry to find running through all his writings the true spirit of the Ishmaelite still. The fruits of his education would appear to better advantage if he were to organize an effort to send the blessings of human progress to those tribes of his brethren who roam the Desert in perpetual hostility towards one another, and who have not as yet risen to any thing sublimer than mutual strife and mutual plunder.

There is nothing upon which an Oriental prides himself so much as the question of blood. The purely personal motive which the Maulvi avows as having influenced him in this enquiry, is quite sufficient to account for his being unaware of the force of evidence which other men deem sufficient. But his assertions in regard to Christians reveal, as it seems to us, an amount of antipathy which must blind him hopelessly to the force of evidence tending to support an opinion subversive of his own. That antipathy is so ill-concealed as to weaken, in the judgment of any impartial student of the facts, the effect of the Maulvi's

reasoning. If his object was to convince Jews and Christians of the erroneousness of the opinion that the genealogical connexion of Muḥammad with Ishmael is not proven, his prevailing principle should have been to discover an ability to weigh the arguments put forward by the other side, and to appraise them at any value they may logically be entitled to. Instead of this, he reveals the old *odium theologicum* of the typical Muslim controversialist, and attributes to a spirit of partisanship the inability to fall in with his conclusion. The truth is, no Muḥammadan is satisfied as to a Christian's impartiality, unless the Christian is prepared to ignore the force of facts and the homage he owes to reason.\*

How strikingly does the character which even Muḥammad himself gives to those adherents of his who would at all costs trace his genealogy up to 'the Father of the Faithful,' contrast with the known characters of the compilers of the lists which shew the genealogy of Our Lord. That genealogy is traced from generation to generation, and from family to family, back to the remotest periods of authentic history. The compilers were not unscrupulous partisans, led on by a spirit of vainglory or unholy strife: they were the recognized apostles, prophets, and historians of the Abrahamic race, whose genealogical lists are among the proudest treasures of the most highly favoured and most intensely conservative of the ancient nations. But the genius of Islām

\* After what we have said regarding the literary productions of Sayyid Aḥmad, the reader will not improbably be disposed to sympathize with him as a man rather hardly dealt with. We will merely say that if the reader has any doubt as to the justice of our criticisms or the veracity of our quotations, that doubt will be removed on a careful and impartial study of the Sayyid's own book. Our only concern with that book is that it is the only work in the English language in which a leading adherent of the Muḥammadan creed has ever yet touched upon the question of the genealogy of the founder of Islām,—a subject which necessarily requires treatment in the present work. Towards the Honourable gentleman personally, we have no reason to cherish feelings other than those of respect. But it is obviously of importance that persons coming fresh to the study of the subject, should not get the impression that this most recondite historical problem has been so snugly set at rest as the learned Maulvi would have it supposed.

spurns historical accuracy, and the Muslim places mere unauthenticated tradition above written and well-attested history. It matters not how patent a makeshift the tradition may be; if its tendency is but favourable to the dogma he wishes to establish, the Muslim forthwith attaches to it the force of authentic history, and adduces it as evidence. *being found*;

In view of all the facts it obviously is incumbent on any Muslim who asserts the descent of Muḥammad from Ishmael, to cite in support of his assertion some accepted genealogical list. Hebrew names turned into Arabic are apt to seem quite different names. No one uninitiated would take 'Nabit' and 'Nebajoth' to be one and the same name.\* Thus any Muḥammadan who happens to be ignorant or unfair, might cite quite a number of names that would startle an unwary person into a concession of the whole question. But let him be challenged to shew proof, and let each name be interrogated. Muḥammad's own utterance, quoted above, may be cited without apprehension, as an ultimate appeal in the case. It will not have escaped the notice of the careful inquirer, that although genealogical proof was, if possible, even more called for in the case of Muḥammad than in the case of Christ; yet the author of the Qur'an supplies no genealogical list whatsoever, exhibiting the descent of Muḥammad either from the great patriarch or from the son of Hagar. On the other hand, although the descent of Our Lord from Abraham was never doubted, even by His adversaries, yet the writers of the New Testament narratives, true to their national instincts, are careful to supply those genealogical lists which incontestibly prove it.

Thus far we have examined the nature of the position which Muslims take up in regard to the question of Ishmael rather than Isaac being 'the Child of Promise.' We now propose to test the

\* For more on this point the reader may consult with advantage Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. cxii, cxxil, cxxvi, cxcii; Newton, *Prophecies*, 21; Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, ii. 158-9, 199.

dogma in the light of the original documents,—the canonical Scriptures of the Jews.

We have already directed attention to the important circumstance that the integrity and uncorruptness of the Sacred Scriptures as they existed in the days of Muhammad, are among the essential doctrines taught in the Qur'ân.\* With all the more confidence, therefore, do we invite the attention of faithful Muslims to the testimony of those Records in relation to the vital question we are now considering. In pursuance, then, of our reply to the Muhammadan dogma regarding the Heir of the Promise, we note that though it is evident that Jehovah made certain promises regarding Ishmael, it is of essential importance that the Muslim should mark that He did so in regard to Isaac also,—with whom, as contrasted with Ishmael, THE COVENANT was, beyond all controversy, made.

The prophecies of Scripture which relate to Ishmael fall naturally under two heads,—those that were revealed before his birth, and those that were revealed after it. The first of these we find in GEN. xvi. 10—12,—

‘And the angel of the Lord said unto Hagar—I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her—Behold, thou art with child; and thou shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man’s hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.’†

It will be observed that in this passage certain terms are obviously used generically. Thus, the expression ‘thy seed’ can clearly not have been intended to refer merely to the immediate fruit of her own womb; it has a remoter reference,—to her posterity in all ages. What is here said of Ishmael, too, must evidently be

\* Cnf. pp. 32, 46, and many other places.

† For some important notes on this passage the reader may consult Fuller, *Genesis*, 376; Irving, *Life of Mahomet*, 5—7; Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 432.

understood not of him alone, but of his descendants also.\* With thus much of explanation, there are several points in the passage which invite attention as being germane to the argument. Other points of a subordinate nature the student will discover on reading up the literature of the subject. Our present concern is to point out that the predictions made by the angel, whatever they were, have been fulfilled. This we shall see to have been the case if we mark what is said here regarding the locality where Ishmael and his descendants were to eventually settle, and what is said of his character and of the character and number of his posterity.

The locality in which the unborn child and his posterity should eventually settle is thus mentioned in the text,—**וְעַל פְּנֵי כָל־אֶחָיו יֹשֵׁב**, which the A. V. renders—‘And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.’ The words of the Original have been differently interpreted by learned men. Thus, Forster says that ‘this expression (**עַל פְּנֵי**) is determined by the foregoing context, and by the consent of most interpreters, to imply a posture of hostility; and to convey the intimation that Ishmael should live in a state of perpetual hostile contact and collision with the legitimate descendants of Abraham.’† To this interpretation he gives in his own adhesion. Arnold agrees with Forster; indeed, he uses nearly the same language. He says,—‘The meaning of this expression is determined by the context, and implies that Ishmael and his posterity would assume a posture of hostility towards their brethren.’ He advocates the rendering—‘He shall dwell against all his brethren;’ ‘signifying that not only would Ishmael’s hand be against every man in general, but even in dwelling with his brethren he would maintain his characteristic hostility. Not without peculiar significance was it predicted that Ishmael should dwell opposing all his brethren,

\* Newton, *Prophecies*, 20, seqq.; Keith, *Evidence of Prophecy*, 516 (edn. Edinburgh, 1848).

† Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, i. 135.

and that his death should be recorded in these words—He fell whilst opposing all his brethren.\* This appears to us to be rather strained. Whether Arnold himself came afterwards to think so too, it is impossible to say; but the remarkable fact is that in a subsequent edition of his work (which appeared under a different name) he expunged the entire passage.† No one could disagree with these scholars in what they say regarding the character of Ishmael; but at present we are concerned rather to ascertain what it was that the angel meant by the particular clause now under consideration. That it implies *opposition* there can be no doubt; but while Forster and Arnold maintain that it implies 'opposition' in the sense of *hostility*, it is the opinion of many of the critics that it implies 'opposition' in the sense of *direction* and *proximity*, and nothing more.‡

Among some of the oriental nations the East is considered the chief or most important of the four leading points of the compass. Indeed, this is probably the reason why in all languages the East comes first in enumerating the points. The fact would seem to be accounted for by the extensive and ancient custom of worshipping with the face towards the rising sun.§ It hence came about that those points were named from the parts of the body when the face is towards the East. Thus, the languages of the Aryan races in India fall back for their nomenclature of the four points upon their parent the Sanskrit, and use more or less corrupted forms of the words पूर्व, पश्चिम, दक्षिण, उत्तर, *pūrvva, pashchima, dakshina, utara*, east, west, south, north; *literally*, before, behind, right, left.|| The custom, indeed,

\* Arnold, *Natural History of Islamism*, 26 (edn. Lond. 1859).

† Arnold, *Islam and Christianity*, 13.

‡ See Fürst and Gesenius's Hebrew Lexicons, s.v. מִצְּרַיִם; Newton, *Prophecies*, 24; Rosenmüller in the *Biblical Cabinet*, xi. 6; Preston, *Notes on the Text of GENESIS* (edn. Cambridge, 1853), apud loc.; and many other authorities.

§ Burton, *Pilgrimage*, 404.

|| Properly speaking, the word उत्तर means 'high;' the allusion being, possibly, to the fact that in India a person facing the east has the lofty Himālayas on his left;

of indicating the four points by terms with such signification is not only very extensive, but is also of very high antiquity. This accounts for some of the names of these four directions in use among the Hebrews and the Arabs. Thus, among the Jews we find the corresponding terms פָּנִים *pânîm*, east, אַחֲרֵי *akhar*, west, שְׂמֹאל *s'mol*, north, יָמִין *yâmin*, south; *literally*, before, behind, left, right.

The word פָּנִים *pânîm*, with which at present we are chiefly concerned, is one of those words which though plural in form, retain the singular sense. The phenomenon is of frequent occurrence in the grammatical structure of sentences in all the Shemitic tongues. Indeed, it is occasionally found in other languages also: thus, in Hindûstânî the form فِجِیں *faujeñ* (pl. of فِجِی *fauj*, 'an army') is sometimes found in construction with a verb in the singular. The idea is that the object referred to consists of several parts; thus, 'an army' is made up of flanks, companies, etc., and many different ranks and gradations, from generals down to camp-followers: so, also, 'the face' (פָּנִים *pânîm*) is made up of cheeks, forehead, chin, nose, eyes, etc. The same thing exists in the Greek, and the word τὰ πρόσωπα is a very familiar and instructive instance.

From its primary signification of 'face' the word פָּנִים has the adverbial sense of 'opposite to,' 'over against,' 'fronting,' 'facing,' 'eastwards.' Exactly the same might be said regarding the signification of the Arabic word for 'east'—namely, قِبْلَ *qabala*, 'before,' 'facing,' 'eastwards.' Hence, the 'Qibla' of Muḥammadans is the direction they *face* when they recite their liturgy. Arnold, in a foot-note to the place already referred to,

or, what is much more probable, to the idea which prevails among other nations having been prevalent among the ancient Aryans long before their immigration into India—namely, that we go *down* towards the south, and *up* towards the north. Many examples of this usage occur in Scripture; e. g. GEN. xii. 10; xxvi. 2; xxxviii. 1; xlv. 25; xlvii. 3; I SAM. xxx. 15, 16; xxv. 1; xxvi. 2; HOS. viii. 9; ACTS, xviii. 5 (consult, for this last passage, the Westminster Revision and the Greek).



7 says that the preposition לְ before מִצְרַיִם implies *opposition*. So it does; but not necessarily 'hostility.' In the passage he refers to—*viz.* 2 KINGS xix. 22—it undoubtedly means this; but to pit against one another, as he does, the forms לְ and מִצְרַיִם as if they each bore a stereotyped meaning from which there was no divergence, is simply to ignore facts for the sake of making the text serve the exigencies of a foregone conclusion. Many examples of the exceeding variety of usage of the phrase now under consideration may be found in Scripture with the aid of a Hebrew Concordance. As one instance we may mention a passage which closely affects the present argument—*viz.* GEN. xxv. 18, where we read,—

'And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur that is *before* Egypt. And he died\* *in the presence of* all his brethren.'†

Here, in one and the same verse, we have the very phrase now under consideration twice over; though, as the italics indicate, it is differently rendered by our translators. The allusion in the former instance is clearly a geographical one, and means 'facing Egypt;' that is, *to the east* of it.

The phrase 'from Havilah unto Shur that is before Egypt' indicates, in all probability, that vast tract of territory which stretches from the margin of the Persian Gulf to the south-east angle of the Mediterranean Sea. The whole region between Egypt and the Euphrates was technically known as 'the East',—at first in respect to Egypt (where the learned Joseph Mede thinks the Israelites acquired this mode of speaking),‡ and afterwards absolutely and without any relation to situation or circumstances. Thus, in GEN. xxv. 6, Abraham is said to have sent the sons of Hagar and Keturah,—

'Eastward, to the country which is commonly called THE EAST.'

\* 'He died':—Better, 'He fell',—that is, 'it (*viz.* his lot) fell to him'=he had his portion. And, as a matter of fact, the Ishmaelites and their ancestor have ever had their portion in the presence of their brethren of Abrahamic descent.

† Fuller, *Genesis*, 391.

‡ Mede, *Works*, 580.

where the name of the region seems to have been derived from *c*, the same situation. We are told, again, in 1 KINGS iv. 30, of Solomon, that,—

‘His wisdom’ excelled the wisdom of all the Children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt;’

that is, of all the neighbouring people in that quarter: for, there were people beyond the boundaries of Egypt, and bordering on the south of Judæa, who were famous for wisdom—*viz.* the Idumæans (see, JER. xlix. 7) to whom we may well believe this passage to have some relation. Thus, Jehovah addresses the Babylonians in JER. xlix. 28,—

‘Arise, ascend unto Kedar, and lay waste the Children of the East;’

notwithstanding that these were, in point of fact, situated to the west of Babylon.\* Among the Jews, in brief, the expression ‘the East’ was the regular synonym for Arabia.†

The latter part of the verse is confessedly difficult to translate. Considering the feuds that existed in the family of Abraham, it is hardly likely that Isaac and the six sons of Keturah were with Ishmael on the occasion of his decease. So that this part of the verse also, ought probably to be rendered in a special and restricted sense, though perhaps not in a geographical one. Arnold says that the verb *נָפַל* ‘invariably signifies’ falling *by violent means*; and he renders it—‘He fell whilst opposing all his brethren:’ in other words,—‘He fell of injuries received while resisting them *to the face*.’ That Arnold’s remark on the verb is not a correct one is evident from the fact that both Gesenius and Fürst render it in this place in the sense of ‘to lie,’ ‘to encamp.’ So that they would render the passage,—‘He encamped to the east of all his brethren;’ that is, his territory lay in that direction. There is a sense in which Arnold’s observation is correct, for when this verb means ‘fall’ in the martial sense of the term,—

\* Louth, *Hebrew Poetry*, 449.

† Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 412, 430.

that is, 'die',—it connotes violence. Kalisch, Preston, and others, ingeniously suggest a possible ellipsis of נָרַדוּ and render the passage—'And his lot fell to the eastward of all his brethren.' Anyhow, the rendering of the A. V. in this place must be given up. How the translators came to make the mistake it is not easy to divine, seeing that the fact of Ishmael's decease is so plainly recorded in the previous verse. Arnold, as we have seen, would defend the rendering; only, he would add a word to the effect that 'He died *fighting*, etc.'

We are not concerned, however, to settle the point as to how Ishmael met his death. The reason for citing the verse was that it contained twice over the idiom of the verse with which our present passage closes. As already intimated, the Jews were not limited to the four forms we have given, when they needed to allude to the points of the compass. They had other forms besides, with still different significations. So also had the Arabians. But with these other designations we have at present no concern. The word with which we are concerned is פָּנִים; which besides its primary meaning of 'face,' has also the adverbial sense 'before,' 'facing,' and consequently 'eastward.' The passage, then, may be rendered,—'And he shall dwell to the east of all his brethren;' that is, 'before' them, or, as the Authorized English Version has it 'in their presence.' Thus does the A. V., according to its usual genius, very felicitously conceal the difficulties of the passage under cover of a rendering which preserves all the ambiguity of the Original, embraces all the shades of meaning, and yet is perfectly sound. Ultimately the A. V. is correct, though a knowledge of the steps by which it can be shewn to be so, is essential to an intelligent comprehension of the passage.

Incidentally, of course, the language implies permanency of occupation,—the posterity of Ishmael were to have a fixed boundary within which they should settle. They would, moreover, be able to maintain their ground and hold their own against

all assailants. As the Arabians have never yet been conquered, not even by Alexander\*, this part of the promise also has thus far been fulfilled. Whatever interpretation of the subordinate details of the passage be deemed correct, we think it is evident enough that the passage contains reference to a certain direction in which the settlement was to take place: it also tells us unmistakably what that direction was. The proper abodes of the Ishmaelites were the districts of Arabia Deserta, which are at present called Badiah. They were, therefore, bounded eastwards by Babylonia and the Euphrates, and spread westwards to Cælesyria and Palestine; in the north they extended to Syria, and in the south indefinitely into the peninsula of Arabia proper. They lived, therefore, regularly, indeed, 'to the east' of their brethren; but they extended their predatory excursions to the borders of all contiguous countries. Their erratic mode of life gave them the character of ubiquity. They wandered wherever their wild spirits incited them to go. They restlessly strayed through the greater part of Arabia Petræa, and reached not unfrequently even to the borders of Egypt. This state of things continues to this day. And thus the prediction of the angel has from the days of Ishmael till now been constantly in course of fulfilment,—'he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren.'† Their settlement to the east of their brethren was, thus, a literal fact,—the other sons of Abraham—namely, those by Sarah and Keturah—having occupied the territory to the west and north-west of them. This is all which it is our business to point out. The candid Muḥammadan will feel that as to the locality mentioned by the angel in this passage, nothing remains to be fulfilled.

Another feature of the prediction is the allusion it contains to the question of character;—'He will be a פְּרִיעַ אָדָם *p'ri'ê àdâm*,

\* Consult, on this interesting point, Newton, *Prophecies*, 25-6; Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia*, 304; Keith, *Evidence of Prophecy*, 517; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 903; Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie*, 302-303, 329-331.

† Kalisch, *Historical and Critical Commentary on GENESIS* (edn. Lond. 1858) *in loc.*

'a wild ass man;' or, as the learned Bochart renders it *tam feras quam onager*, 'as wild as a wild ass.\* The phraseology is suggestive, and will repay a little study.

In JOB xxxix. 5. we find mention of an animal called the עֲרֹד 'arodh, which is generally held to be the same as אֲרֹמָה 'aromah. Drake, however, is of opinion that they are the designations of creatures of different species; and he suggests that the עֲרֹד may rather be the wild mule (*Equus hemionus*, Pallas) of Mongolia, which is superior to the other in strength, beauty, and swiftness. Unfortunately, however, though he twice suggests the opinion, he in each instance merely mentions it as 'probable,' and gives no authorities.† The probability appears to derive corroboration by the circumstance that the both designations occur in one short verse: thus,—

'Who hath sent out the אֲרֹמָה free, or who hath loosed the bands of the עֲרֹד?'

The opinion suggested by Drake is maintained strongly by Good, whose description, however, of the latter of these animals corresponds in almost every particular with the description given by other writers of the former.‡ That the two words designate one and the same animal is the opinion that is advocated by most scholars, among whom is Gesenius. This writer explains the occurrence of the second word, עֲרֹד by the opinion that it is merely the Aramæan equivalent of the Hebrew word used in the promise given to Hagar. In the Targums the form is אֲרֹדְחָא: *arodhâa*; Syr. 'Urdun; Arab. أَرْدَان 'ardan.§ The usage of the

\* Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, pars I, lib. iii, cap. 16, col. 878.

† See his Article on the word Ass in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. The strange thing is that in his *Notes on Hosea*, viii. 9 (edn. Lond. 1853) he speaks of the words as being alternative names of one and the same animal.

‡ See *The Book of JOB, literally translated, with Critical Notes*, by John Mason Good, F. R. S., etc. (edn. Lond. 1812).

§ We may remark that the common word in Arabic for the wild ass is عَيْر, 'ayr. It has several forms in the plural; thus, a'yâr, 'iyâr, 'uyûr, 'uyûrat, ma'yûrâ', 'iyârât. Lane, *Arabic Lexicon*, p. 2208, col. 3; Richardson, *Persian and Arabic Dictionary*, p. 885, col. 2.

Dictionary  
لغة  
عرب

Book of JOB does not help us, for as we have just seen, both words occur in that book. There is some ground for supposing that the opinion held by Gesenius is the same that was held by The Seventy. The unfortunate thing is that their usage vacillates, so as to suggest the surmise, either that the point did not occur to them, or that they did not observe any particular principle of concert in regard to the translation of equivalent terms, or that they found the question too difficult for them to solve. The Aramæan word occurs again in DAN. v. 21, where we get the Chaldee definite or emphatic plural form of it ערדא *'arâdhayyda* which Theodoret renders τῶν ὀνάγγων. The Seventy also render it by the same word in that place, and by the component parts of that word, ὄνος ἄγγιος, in the place in JOB. The usage of The Seventy, however, does not help us to ascertain whether in their opinion these animals were the same or different; for whereas in JOB xi. 12 they render it ὄνος ἐρημίτης, and in GEN. xvi. 12 they translate it as an adjective—viz. ἄγρικός (*ἀνθρῶπος*), yet in PSA. civ. 11 and JER. xiv. 6 they render it by the same word by which they render the other word in the place cited in DANIEL. It is, indeed, remarkable that in JOB xxxix. 5, The Seventy omit to render the word ערר and thus force upon the reader the impression that no other animal excepting the פרא is mentioned in the Original. The conclusion which Good arrives at is that The Seventy 'did not know what to make of it.' The more charitable supposition seems to be that, believing the words to refer to one and the same animal, they did not think it worth while to render it twice by the same equivalent or by any other equivalent in one short verse. It is, not improbably, by a similar principle that we are to account for its appearing in the Original in this place, for with the single exception of the Chaldaic plural in DANIEL, the word occurs nowhere else the whole Bible through. We would not, however, vindicate the conduct of The Seventy in apparently 'taking from' the Word of God, even in so seemingly unimportant a case as this.

Nor does the etymology of the words afford any assistance, for in the case of each of them it amounts in the end to nearly the same thing. Dr. Benjamin Davies understands the word עָרֹד to mean, in effect, *the shy one, the timid one*; and hence, *the flier*; while פָּרָא signifies *the swift runner*. Fürst and Gesenius hold, both of them, what is in substance the same opinion as Davies holds. The creature is indeed so exceedingly *shy*, quick-sighted, and alert, that even good marksmen find it very difficult to get within rifle-range of it, and it is captured rather by strategy than by open pursuit. Bochart\* hints a suspicion that the word עָרֹד is onomatopoeic, and is given from the peculiar cry of the creature (that is of the פָּרָא) when he catches sight of a human being. The word would thus mean 'the neigher,' 'the brayer,' 'the alarmist,' 'the screecher,' or something to that effect. (Cnf. Aram. 'Arôdh, Sk. rud, Lat. rudere.) Gesenius thinks that there may be some truth in Bochart's conjecture, though we have no confirmation of it in the other Shemitic dialects.† The Hebrew name of the creature occurs several times in the Old Testament; but that particular and most remarkable combination of words we find in the text, whose peculiarity is that the designation of the wild ass is united adjectivally with the word for 'man,' occurs in only one other place—namely, in JOB xi. 12, where we read,—

‘For vain man would be wise, though man be born a wild  
ass’s colt’;—

literally, ‘the colt of a wild ass man’,—a person not amenable to instruction, cultivation, or control. It is a very striking image of what is wild, untamed, refractory, and rebellious. אִשְׁמָאֵל

Not without reason, we must suppose, was this animal chosen under Divine authority as the emblem of the unborn posterity

\* Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, ii. 218 (edn. Leipzig).

† Some interesting things on the matter of this discussion may be found by consulting, in addition to the works already mentioned, Gesenius's *Thesaurus*; Fürst's *Hebräisches und Chaldäisches Handwörterbuch*; Davies's *Student's Hebrew Lexicon*; Richardson's *Persian and Arabic Dictionary*; Lane's *Arabic Lexicon*.

of Ishmael. It is, of course, impossible to say to what extent it was customary in the common parlance of the ancient Hebrews to apply the term to members of the human species. The use of it in a document so ancient as the one from which we have just quoted, proves that long before the writing of the Pentateuch the creature attracted attention, and suggests the probability that the application of it to human beings may not have been unprecedented. It is evident from Burckhardt that among the Arabs, just as in all nations, the ass is the emblem of stupidity.\* Although the period of this enterprising and scholarly traveller dates so recently as the first decade of the present century, yet the Proverbs, which he so carefully collected, of a people so little influenced by change, would be of very ancient date. But the word in use among the Arabs for the purpose of sarcasm—*vis.* همار *himâr*—is the designation of another member of the species, and not of the beautiful creature—the فارس *fara'*—mentioned in the text. The former of these terms is general, and the latter particular; in other words, the *fara'* is a *himâr*, but the *himâr* is not necessarily a *fara'*. Though there is an essential difference between the *himâr* of the proverb and the *pêrê* (or *fara'*) of the prediction, yet the beautiful *pêrê* is still an ass,—the hereditary possessor of those distinctive qualities which marked him out as answering the purposes of the comparison.

But that the implied comparison in the prediction of the

\* Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs*, p. 14 (Art. 41) and many other places in that book (edn. Lond. 1875). Popular feeling seems undecided as to the true character of this humble applicant for leave to exist:—now he is the emblem of 'stupidity,' and now of 'patience.' He endures what other brutes will not put up with, and his recompense is that his endurance is construed into stupidity. This endurance may be the result of stolidity, or of absence of feeling, or want of self-respect or proper pride: but it may also result from natural self-restraint. If the latter, then his reputation for stupidity arises from a vulgar misunderstanding and a hasty generalization,—in which case he is grievously wronged: if the former, then it is not the stolid ass but the high-bred horse (who wants to go, but may not) that should rather be the emblem of patience. If patience is a virtue possessed in perfection only by donkeys the example is not inspiring.



angel was not considered so deprec*ia*tory as comparison to the asinine species is considered among ourselves, would appear from the fact that the prospect did not elicit from Hagar any symptoms of distress or dis*ma*y. † Not improbable, either, is the supposition that the language conveyed to her mind a very distinct image of the kind of persons the posterity of her son were to be,—that image being to her one which to most mothers would occasion emotions of complacency,—the image of dauntless and indomitable independence.\* The latter part of the verse would convey to her mind the additional idea of reprisals,—an idea that would be, not at all unpleasing to her, who with her beloved and only son, had been cast out and disinherited. The wild ass was a creature with which she was already quite familiar; even the expression ‘wild ass man’ itself may have been familiar to her, and from what we have just seen from the Book of JOB, it is highly probable that it was. That Ishmael and his posterity were the first to whom the designation had been applied, is therefore not by any means certain. Indeed, it is hardly credible that the peoples who passed their lives in the wilds of Arabia were not themselves possessed of the genius of the wilderness. And, as a matter of fact, there is plenty of evidence to shew that many tribes of people were scattered over the peninsula long anterior to the days of Ishmael, and that these were given to habits of plundering. In addition to the evidence of the Book of GENESIS,—which contains, among other things of a similar import, evidence of the incompatibility of the presence of ‘the Canaanite’ with the peaceful nomad life of Abraham,—there is the emphatic evidence afforded by the narrative of Job, where the Sabeans are said to have fallen suddenly and unexpectedly, after the regular traditional manner, upon the flocks of the afflicted patriarch, and to have taken them away.† And in that graphic account of the depredations of the wilderness robbers which we have in JOB xxiv, we have this very

\* Keith, *Evidence of Prophecy*, 517.

† JOB i. 15.

word אִשְׂמָאֵל employed by the writer to add vividness to his description. The point for us to mark is that the descendants of Ishmael were to roam in the wilds of Arabia, and develop characteristics corresponding to those of the onager.

A very clear and correct conception of the characteristics of this animal may be gathered from the allusions made to it by the Scripture writers. The effect of those allusions is to shew that he was known thousands of years ago to be the same as to-day,—a wild, independent, and haughty creature, a denizen of the wilderness. Rude, bold, shy of the human race, untamed, intractable, loving to live at large, impatient of restraint,—a very emblem of roughness, wildness, and irrationality. The peculiar characteristics of the creature attracted the observation not of Scripture writers alone, but also of nations not residing in his immediate neighbourhood. His terrible and unrelenting nature was perceived by the Romans; and just as among our fathers the term 'ram' was applied in military service from the method in which the ram is wont to fight, so the name of the 'onager' was used by the Romans as the synonym for a kind of engine used in war for projecting large stones.\* And that shyness and tendency to take flight which the onager in a special degree exhibits, and which is so characteristic of wild animals, is alluded to by Virgil.† Our concern, however, is with those features that shew the analogy of the creature to the posterity of Ishmael. *Levin*

From the time when Ishmael was removed from the patriarchal home, he began, all unconsciously to himself, to answer the description given of him in the prediction which was made before his birth. He took to the savage and uncivilized life of the Arabian wilderness, and became an archer. Early he must have become inured to hardship; and as his body grew robust, his *Shon*

\* Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historia*, xxiii. 4, 7; Vegetius, *De rei militaris instituta*, iv. 22.

† Virgil, *Georgica*, bk. iii, line 409. The creature is alluded to frequently in the classical writers.

## THE CLAIMS OF ISHMAEL.

mind doubtless became <sup>sw</sup>energetic and even fierce from the condition of exile into which he had almost from the first been forced. Not only, Ishmael, however, but also the race of men who were to have the misfortune of being his descendants, were to reveal a character in all essential respects analogous to that of the wild ass. Possessed by nature of the distinctive qualities of this animal, they were to find their gratification in the exercise of them,—displaying them with fearful accuracy, and not possessed of any emotion that should prompt them to rise above that inhuman condition. As might have been expected, the posterity of Ishmael, even down to the present day, keep to the occupations and pastimes of their father,—combining the <sup>careless</sup>duties of nomad life with the pleasures of archery. So dexterous and successful are they in the use of the bow and the matchlock, that nothing can escape their fatal aim. As the wild ass is remarkable for its scorn of a tamed and domesticated life, and for its love of the precarious and reckless life of the Desert, so do the descendants of Ishmael despise and shun the tumult of the city and revel in a savage independence.

It might have been well for the Sons of Ishmael if the prediction had stopped at the analogy of the wild ass; but it goes further, and foretells that they would live in a condition of wrongdoing and of consequent suffering. The wrongdoing would consist in a chronic condition of strife, mischief, and guerilla war; and the suffering would consist in exclusion from the society of civilized and progressive humanity, and the stirring up against them of feelings corresponding to those which they themselves would foster and display. Their course would be marked by the wanton infliction of misery upon the human species without assignable justice and without intelligent reason. And now that some forty centuries have rolled slowly away, the verdict of history declares that the fulfilment corresponds with the prediction. As far as the Ishmaelites of the Desert are concerned, there is nothing in history or in any of the accounts of travellers to shew

that there are any exceptions. If there are any, they must indeed be few. The Badawî, wherever he turns up, is found to bear about with him the same characteristics,—a bold and daring and restless character, living in the wilderness by the precarious product of plunder and the bow. Relentless as a persecutor, cruel as an enemy, and altogether reckless of danger, he seems to court the calamity that could bring his dreary and useless existence to a close. And the suffering and estrangement to which the posterity of Ishmael have always been subject, are but the natural echo of civilized men in response to that spirit of bitter aversion and hostility which the former have always and everywhere manifested towards their species.

With the view of putting ourselves into position for a more adequate realization of the force of the analogy, we will look carefully at the creature mentioned by the angel. There are several kinds of asses mentioned in Scripture; but the one now referred to is a particular breed,—the wild ass of Asia, in some respects the most remarkable of them all. The best modern elucidation of several creatures of the ass species we owe to the researches of Dr. Pallas. He supposes the animal now under review to be the same that Aristotle calls *Hemionos*.<sup>\*</sup> The idea embodied in this name—ἡμι + ὄνος, 'half-donkey'—suggests the compromise that will naturally occur to any one who has seen the creature. Good affirms that though it is called 'the wild mule,' it is not a mongrel production; and he ridicules as 'vulgar' the opinion of its being 'a hybrid product of the ass and ox genus.' If it is a hybrid, the difficulty is to ascertain its parentage. But its habits shew that it cannot be a mule in the strict sense of the term; and it is probably so called only in allusion to its appearance.<sup>†</sup>

In works on Natural History it is sometimes called 'the onager'—*Asinus Onager*, Gray—the Latin outcome of the Greek name. Pennant, however, describes it under the name given it

<sup>\*</sup> Pallas, *Reisen*, iii. 511.

<sup>†</sup> Cnf. JER. ii, 24, of which more presently.

by the Mongolians—namely, *Dschiketai*, which is variously spelt in English books *Dsigetai*, *Dziggetai*, *Jiggetai*, etc.\* Shaw calls it *Jickta*, obviously from the Mongolian. The Chinese call it *Yototse*, which also is doubtless after the Mongolian. Its Hebrew designation צִיָּה is derived from an unused root signifying 'to run swiftly,' 'to run wild:' it consequently means 'the swift runner,' 'the fleet one,' 'the wild one;' and the creature is so designated on account of that extraordinary fleetness and untameability which form its most marked characteristics. It has been doubted by some whether this beautiful creature is really and purely an animal of the ass tribe; and it is not to be wondered at that doubt should arise regarding such a point. In general outline it is distinguished from the ordinary ass by its greater length and by the finer form of its limbs, its straight-up chest, and somewhat compressed body.† Altogether its appearance, character, and bearing suggest something far nobler than even the cultured ass of the East. It was formerly found in Palestine, Syria, Arabia, and adjacent countries, but is now said to be rare in the western portions of Asia. It avoids wood-lands, and is found only in treeless and interminable Deserts, and on rocky mountain sides.‡ It continues to be found in the wilderness wilds of Arabia and Persia, in the plains of Mesopotamia, in the deserts of northern Africa, in Kutch, on the shores of the Indus, in the Panjâb, Siberia, and China; but it is found chiefly in Tartari, where it is known under the name of 'Koulân.'

How strikingly suited this animal was for the purpose of comparison in the present instance, will be readily apprehended

\* See also *Rebat*, *Naturgeschichte*, 320. Liddell and Scott (in their *Greek and English Lexicon*, 5th edn. 1861, s. v. *ἡμίονος*) say that this word 'Jiggetai' is Persian for this animal. But its Persian name is *gor* (گور). There is no such word as 'Jiggetai' in the Persian language.

† The reader will find a picture of it in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iii Appendix A, p. xx, from which invaluable repertory much of our information regarding this curious creature has been obtained.

‡ Burckhardt, *Bevoluns and Wahâbys*, i. 221.

if we note a little closely some of its habits and characteristics. In the first place, its very appearance is remarkable in no ordinary degree, as was perceived long ago by Martial, the Roman veterinarian, who speaks of it as '*pulcher onager*.'\* How well this description meets the case must have been felt by anyone who has seen the specimen in the gardens of the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park. A fine, strong, noble-looking creature, of the size and bearing of a lightly-built horse; light-footed and slender, with a neck resembling that of the stag, which, unlike the ordinary ass, he always carries erect. The forehead is arched and high, and the ears slender, sharp-pointed, and erect, but not so long as those of the common member of the species. He differs from his relation as known to us, by the greater length of his body and the finer form of his limbs. In size and proportions he surpasses by far the finest specimens of the ass tribe, even when they have been subjected to culture, and the breeds have been carefully guarded. Its smooth skin is generally of a silver colour, and sometimes of a cherry-brown, cream, or grey, with broad patches of bright bay on the thigh, shoulder, and neck. The mane is of a dark colour, sometimes woolly, sometimes hanging vertically along the neck. The coffee-brown colour of the mane is prolonged in a bushy stripe of hair down the back to the tuft of the long tail; but though the dark stripe across the shoulders, common to the ass species, is sometimes found in the *père*, it is not by any means an invariable mark. In point of gracefulness the creature resembles the horse, as it bears its arched neck aloft with a fierce haughtiness of air that seems to defy control.

In entire keeping with what might have been expected in a creature of this description, we find that he is wonderfully nimble and alert. His motions are so fleet that he easily escapes the hunter. The very name that is used regarding him in the prediction under notice, embodies the idea of rapidity. Testimony

\* Gargilius Martialis, xiii. 100.

to his extraordinary swiftness has been borne by everyone who has had opportunity of observing his characteristics. Aristotle says that he is swifter than the swiftest horse.\* This testimony is corroborated by an eminent traveller† quoted by Gesenius, who in turn adds his own testimony to the description by saying that it agrees precisely with a live specimen which he himself saw in the Zoological Gardens in London in 1835. According to Layard, who had ample opportunity of observing the creature during his researches around Nineveh, it equals the gazelle in fleetness, and to match it in point of agility is a feat which only one or two of the most celebrated mares have been known to accomplish. In the region to which Layard refers, Xenophon, more than twenty centuries ago, during the famous expedition of Cyrus, observed herds of these creatures so fleet that the horsemen could only capture them by dividing themselves into relays, and succeeding one another in the pursuit.‡ Thus the natural alertness of the wild ass, its dread of capture, and its perpetual apprehension of the thing it dreads, must render its whole existence one of sustained unrest. ✕

Not less remarkable than the exceeding swiftness of the wild ass is the indomitability of his temper, his impatience of control, and his power of enduring privation. His wild and proud appearance is such as to indicate unsubdued power and perfect independence; and indeed no one has hitherto succeeded in taming him. They are sometimes caught by the Arabs while yet young, and the Arabs feed them with milk in their tents. But even in such cases the wild element in their natures inevitably develops itself in due time, and they then prefer dying in their fetters rather than submit to the will of man. As might have been anticipated, one of its most marked characteristics is its

\* Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, lib. vi, cap. 29.

† Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia*, i. 459. See also, Oppian, *Kynagetikê*; Rosenmüller on GEN. xvi. 12; Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, i. 870.

‡ Xenophon, *Anabasis*, bk. I, ch. v, parag. 2.

obstinate preference of the hardships of a precarious existence to the plenty that is often the concomitant of loss of independence. Although in those latitudes which it generally inhabits, water seems to be a vital condition, the wild ass can exist long without it. Its marvellous power of enduring hunger and thirst is the one consideration that explains its continuance in its arid and cheerless abodes. None the less must it be sensible of the deprivation, for if by chance it meets with an abundant supply of food, it seizes it eagerly and sates its whole desire. Their food, according to Shaw, consists mainly of saline or bitter and lactescent plants. They are also fond of salt or brackish water. The Arabs and Persians hunt them as game, and esteem their flesh a peculiar delicacy,\*—an opinion in which people of more civilized habits have not been able to agree with them.

As already intimated, the allusions made to the wild ass by the Scripture writers are such as throw considerable light on several of its characteristics. Besides those already noted, a few yet remain which we quote on account of their correspondence to the characteristics of the Badawis. Thus, in JER. ii. 23, 24 we read,—

‘See thy way in the valley!† know what thou hast done,—  
a swift dromedary traversing her ways!‡ a wild ass used  
to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure!  
In her occasion who can turn her away? All they that seek  
her will not weary themselves: in her month they shall  
find her.’

A glance at the Original will shew that under the influence of an honourable regard for the feelings of the reader, the translators have even obscured the actual thought of the prophet. The vehemence with which the female of this species of animal, courses the Desert in search of a male,—snuffing the wind in

\* Burckhardt, *Bedouins and Wahābys*, i. 221.

† ‘In the valley’;—Alluding to the worship of Molokh in the valley of Hinnom. Cnf. 2 KINGS xxiii. 10.

‡ ‘Traversing her ways’;—That is, running about hither and thither.



order to ascertain where one may be found,—is thus selected by the inspired authority to set forth the uncontrollable impulse to idolatry which found place in the hearts of the Jews. By the ‘month’ of the ass is to be understood the particular season when the impulse for copulation was strongest. Instead of then keeping to the Desert, the female is found frequenting those places in which even the tame asses are in pasture, so that there might be no difficulty in finding her. Thus does the Scripture, in fixing upon something that should fitly symbolize the obstinate and unreasoning apostasy of Israel from the one living and true God, attest the savage and uncontrollable libidinosity of the wild ass,—fit emblem of the unsubdued waywardness and crude tenacity of the wild sons of Arabia. ✕

Another remarkable feature of the analogy is shewn in that singular combination of gregariousness and solitude which marks both the wild ass and the descendant of Ishmael. In their native wilds the asses live socially together in herds numbering from fifteen to a hundred. The strongest and most courageous of the males acts as guide and watchman to the rest. In time of danger he gives the signal for flight by running three times round in a circle. If the leader is slain, the flock is easily and at once dispersed, and falls a prey to the enemy. But though they thus generally go in herds and live sociably among themselves, yet they keep aloof from animals of other species. Living thus in wild herds, untamed and untameable, the wild ass scorns the tumult of the town, and roves on the parched mountain sides in search of grass and herbs. All this is forcibly expressed in JOB xxxix. 5—8, where we read,— ✕

‘Who hath sent out the *wild ass* free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass,—whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwelling? He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the cry of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.’

From this it appears that Ishmael and his posterity were to be

wild, savage, fierce, ranging the Desert, not easily softened and tamed to society. From all that is known of the Badawis, from our own time back to the remotest periods, this is but a true description of their genuine character and their actual practice. Their custom of moving about in troops is attested in JOB xxiv. 5, where we read,—

‘Behold, as *wild asses* in the desert go they forth to their work,—rising betimes for a prey of the wilderness, food for them and their children.’

The allusion is to the tribes of plunderers, or to the houseless poor mentioned in *ver.* 4, whom the extortion and violence of haughty tyrants had scared away from society, and compelled unitedly to seek subsistence by public pillage,—they roamed about, like herds of wild asses, in search of plunder.

Their habit of segregating themselves from creatures of other species than their own is attested in ISA. xxxii. 14, where we read,—

‘The palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever,—a joy of *wild asses*, a pasture of flocks.’

We thus have evidence that the aversion of the wild ass to the human species, and its habit of isolating itself in herds for the double purpose of society and defence, are characteristics of the creature which were observed by men at a very remote period of human history.

But though thus frequently found in herds, yet they are apt to separate from one another from a certain love of solitude, and when so separated they become the victims of fatal calamity. These facts are alluded to in HOS. viii. 9, where we read,—

‘They are gone up to Assyria,—a *wild ass* alone by himself.\*

And in ECCLUS. xiii. (ver. 19 in the LXX.),—

‘The wild asses are the prey of lions in the wilderness.’

\* ‘Alone by himself’;—The point of comparison in this animal is its untractableness and waywardness, which lead it to keep clear of the haunts of other animals.

Under the emblem of the wild ass the character of Ishmael and his descendants is here affectingly set forth,—self-willed, pertinacious, swift to do evil. The former passage describes the attitude of idolatrous and apostate Israel towards God, and incidentally shews, under the figure of the obstinate wild ass, that the man who turns away from his Creator pursues a course which must culminate as fatally as isolation from the herd is apt to culminate in the case of the solitary onager which becomes the prey of the carnivorous beasts that waylay him in the Desert.\* It will be evident by a reference to the Hebrew that the 'wild ass' alluded to in these passages is the creature whose designation occurs in the prediction now before us.

Thus much for an account of the animal with whom the Badawis and their father Ishmael are pointedly compared by inspired authority in the text. No comparison could be more apt or more powerful, for in all essential particulars they meet the comparison the whole way along.

In the remarks we are about to make an important distinction will need to be borne in mind,—the distinction between the Yoktânide and the Ishmaelite Arabs.† The former are variously called 'Araba'l-'Araba, Ahli Hadr, Hadesi; and the latter, Must-'Araba, Mut-'Arraba, Ahli Badu, Badawîn.‡

The former—that is, the Yoktânide Arabs—are the dwellers in fixed localities, and the latter are the people of the Desert; the one class form themselves into townships, and carry on trade,—chiefly in the south; the latter, like the earlier offspring of Ishmael, roam about with their flocks and tents in the vast Desert between

\* Pusey, *Minor Prophets*, in loc.

† The reader will find much interesting information on this point in Ibnal-Athîr, i. 55—58; Pocock, *Specimen*, 40, 46; Weil, *Leben des Mohammed*, 5, seqq.; De Percival, *Histoire des Arabes*, i. 5, seqq.; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, i. Introd. ch. iii; Syed Ahmed Khan, *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 12, seqq.; Lenormant, *Ancient History of the East*, ii. 293; Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ch. xxiv; Syed Ameer Ali, *Life of Mohammed*, 22; Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 411; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 4—7.

‡ All these words, we may remark, are variously spelt, not only by English writers but also by the people of Arabia.

Egypt and the Euphrates: the former earn their livelihood by industries of various kinds; while the latter combine with the care of their flocks the business of plunder. Roughly speaking, the distinction to which we refer may be said to be the distinction between the southern and the northern Arabs, or the older Arabs and the subsequent ones, the pure and the mixed or half-caste, the aboriginal and the adventitious. The designations, therefore, of the latter class imply something of contempt,—that they are interlopers, and of mixed breed,—the allusion being to the fact that Ishmael was not properly a native of the country, and that his mother was an Egyptian. This distinction is expressly indicated in the narrative in GENESIS; and it happens to be the distinction which the Arabians themselves make with regard to the two leading sections of the population of their country. They strictly separate the descendants of Yuktân from the progeny of Ishmael; and we thus find the germ of the later divisions of the Arabians into the chief southern tribe of the Himyârî, and the chief northern tribe of the Quraish.\* /

Our present concern is with the second of these classes,—the Ishmaelite Arabs or Badawîs. Lane tells us that wherever the Arabic language is spoken, the term '*Arab*' is used to designate only the Badawîs regarded collectively. In speaking of a tribe of Badawîs, or of a small number, the word '*Urbân*' is also used. A single individual of the class is called *Badawî* (fem. *Badawîyah*).† It is, indeed, wonderful to observe to what an extent the very same language that describes the character and habits of the wild ass describes also the character and habits of these descen-

\* Kalisch, *Genesis*, in loc.; Lane's *Arabic Lexicon*, s. vv. On the subject of the Arabs before Ishmael, the reader may consult Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, ii. 133.

† Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 37. Cnf. Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 414. It will have been noted that in the present treatise we have kept to the Anglicized form '*Badawîs*' for the plural. The word is derived from *Bîdah*, 'a desert:' so that a *Badawî* is a 'Desert-man.' The genuine Arabic plural is *Baddawî*: also *Bidawîn*. The reader will agree, at any rate, that the use of the forms '*Bedouin*' for the singular and '*Bedouins*' for the plural is a little too bad,

dants of Ishmael.\* There are features even in the bodily structure and constitution of the one that awaken the memory of the other; so that if we turn from the description of the physique of the wild ass to that of those other denizens of the Arabian wilderness to whom the angel alluded, it is almost impossible not to catch the application of the angel's words or to realize the gist of the analogy. It is true that in person most Badawis are rather undersized,—the men as well as the women. This results no doubt from hardship and irregular living endured through unnumbered generations. Their complexion, especially in the south, is dark; their hair coarse, copious, and black; their eyes dark and oval: the nose is commonly aquiline, and the features well-formed; and the beard and moustache are apt to be somewhat scanty. The men are active, but not always strong; the women for the most part plain. Yet with all this there is great and almost inexhaustible power of endurance, while the spare but athletic form, the grave and matter-of-fact but social temperament, the active habits and wonderful swiftness, all combine to proclaim the Badawi to be the man referred to under the figure of the wild ass of the Desert. To the description of the wild ass we have but to add that the reference in the prediction is to a being of the human species. The worst of all the enemies of the human race is man. If it is true that it is the posterity of Isaac who in the first instance are the special aversion of the posterity of Ishmael, it is no less true, as history abundantly shews, that by reason of their aversion to the human species they are excluded from the comity of nations,—‘his hand shall be against every man.’ The picture is not of our making,—its details were supplied by ‘the angel of God.’ The subject of the prediction was to be not only פֶּרֶץ *pérec*, but also אָדָם *ádám*,—not only a wild animal, but also ‘a man.’ We have but to picture to our imagination a creature in which the essential qualities of the two are combined, and we

\* Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 391; Newton, *Prophecies*, 20 seqq.; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 22.

have then the best possible conception of the true son of Ishmael in all history down to our own time.

It is a fact well sustained by the evidence of travellers that the Muslims of the southern parts of Arabia are much less inhospitable to strangers and much less strict in their adhesion to Islâm than are those of the north.\* As Makka, the original spring of The Faith, is as near to the south as to the north, the phenomenon is probably attributable rather to the proximity of the territories of the Jews than to any other cause. It is not unreasonable to suppose that such should be the case, seeing that Ishmaelite and Jew are the hereditary enemies of each other. The nearer we approach the lines of contact between their territories the more distinctly should we expect the special aversions of the people to reveal themselves; and inasmuch as their aversions are emphatically of a religious nature, the principle of tenacity for points of religious faith and practice ought to shew itself more strongly in the north than in the far remote regions of the south. Planted by the hand of Providence at the first in immediate contact with their brethren, the offspring of Isaac, the Ishmaelites early cultivated a spirit of general hostility to mankind by the habitual exercise of an implacable and unremitting hostility towards the Jews. When this characteristic feature in the prophetic portion of Ishmael is compared with the history of the Jews and the Arabs, the exactness of the correspondence between the prediction and the accomplishment must strike even the most cursory observer. Scripture and Jewish history alike abound with evidence of the rooted and hereditary antipathy reciprocally indulged in by the two nations, and with notices of the incessant though desultory warfare carried on between them. Such, indeed, was the proverbial inveteracy of this international hatred, that we find Tacitus, in his enumeration of the forces which composed the army of Titus at the siege of Jerusalem,

\* No less striking than beautiful is a proof of this given by Burckhardt, *Arabia*, ii. 380.

accompanying his laconic allusion to the Arab auxiliaries with mention of their notorious hostility towards their neighbours the Jews,—‘Solito inter accolæ odio infensa Judæis Arabum manus!’\* With his usual brevity and characteristic pregnancy and suggestiveness does the philosophic historian thus attest in one significant sentence the prescriptive notoriety of the mutual hatred of these two races. Their mutual hostility indeed bespoke more than the hatred of mere neighbourhood, and induced ‘plus quam civilia bella.’† Thus have the descendants of Ishmael been all along unconsciously and undesignedly proving their paternity and verifying the words of the prediction.

But the prophetic promise of the text has been realized far beyond this its immediate tenour;‡ the aversion of the Ishmaelite has extended not to one nation, but to all,—his hand has been against every man. The chief importance of the Ishmaelites commenced only when the kindred nations had either been expelled or extirpated. They became powerful and formidable under the name of Saracens.§ They marched forth to curb the world, and to subdue it to their dominion, and force the nations into an acceptance of their newly-acquired faith. They swarmed into Persia, they inundated northern India and the territories east of the Caspian Sea. They carried their victorious arms into Syria, Egypt, and the interior of Africa. They took possession of Spain and Portugal, Sicily and Sardinia, and ‘beyond their native tracts ascended more than a hundred thrones.’|| And prior to their subjection to the power of Muḥammad they preserved their liberty, with very little interruption, even from the time of the Deluge.¶ No hero has at any time succeeded in

\* Tacitus, *Historia*, lib. v. sect. i.

† Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, i. 135, and ref.

‡ Kalisch, *Genesis*, 244.

§ For an interesting discussion concerning the origin of this word, see Pocock, *Specimen*, 33—5.

|| Kalisch, *Genesis*, 244.

¶ Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10.

mastering them in their own Deserts;\* and though very great armies have at times been sent against them, all attempts to subdue them have been unsuccessful.† The power which the Assyrian and Babylonish kings had over them was limited to small portions only of their tribes, and was but transitory,—they never obtained permanent footing among them.‡ The monarchs of Persia, again, though friendly to the Arabs, and so far respected by them as to have an annual present of frankincense sent them by the Arabs,§ could never make them tributary:¶ but these presents, as also the presents of cattle which they sent to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, were not of the nature of tribute, but were purely voluntary.¶ They are, in fact, expressly mentioned in this connexion as ‘independent allies.’\*\* So far, indeed, were the Persians from being masters of the Arabs, that we are told that Cambyses, on his expedition against Egypt, was obliged to ask their permission to be allowed to pass through their territories.†† Even the ambition of Alexander the Great and of his successors in the Grecian empire experienced in the attempt to subjugate the Arabs an insuperable check.‡‡ When Alexander had subdued the mighty empire of the Persians, the Arabs had yet so little dread of him, that they alone, of all the neighbouring nations, sent no ambassadors to him from first to last.§§ This fact, together with a desire to possess himself of so rich a country as in some respects Arabia was,||| led to his forming a design against it; and had he not died before he could put that design into execution,¶¶ the Arabs might possibly have convinced him

\* Kalisch, *Genesis*, 244.

† Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10.

‡ Diodorus Siculus, ii. 131; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10.

§ Herodotus, lib. iii, cap. 97.

¶ Diodorus Siculus, ii. 131; Herodotus, lib. iii, cap. 97.

¶ Keith, *Evidence of Prophecy*, 517; Kalisch, *Genesis*, 244.

\*\* Kalisch, *Genesis*, 244.

†† Herodotus, lib. iii, capp. 8, 98; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10.

‡‡ Kalisch, *Genesis*, 244. §§ Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10. ||| Cnf. p. 177, note\*

¶¶ Strabo, lib. xvi, pp. 1076, 1132 (edn. Amsterdam, 1707); Arrianus, lib. vii, p. 300 (edn. Gronovius).



that he was not invincible: nor does it appear that any of his successors in the Grecian empire, whether in Asia or in Egypt, ever afterwards made any attempt against these indomitable Sons of the Desert.\*

Nor were the attempts of the Romans more successful than those of the Greeks. They never conquered any part of Arabia properly so called.† The most they did was to make some tribes in Syria tributary to them,—as Pompey did in the case of a tribe commanded by Sampsikramus (Shamsu'l-Karâm) who reigned at Hums or Emessa.‡ But none of the Romans, or any other nations that we know of, ever penetrated so far into Arabia as did Ælius Gallus, under Augustus Cæsar;§ yet this expedition against the Arabs totally failed.|| So far was this great Roman General from subduing Arabia, as some writers have contended,¶ that we have it on the authority of Strabo that he was soon obliged to retire from the country without having achieved anything considerable, and having lost the better portion of his army by sickness and other calamities.\*\* And the later efforts of the Romans—when, in the year 105 of the Christian era, Bostra (one degree south of Damascus) was, under Cornelius Palma, Governor of Syria, constituted the northern capital of that province of the peninsula which extended thence to the Red Sea—were unable either to bend the independence of the Arabs, or to exercise any influence over their manners.†† Such ill success it probably was that discouraged the Romans from attacking them any more; for Trajan, notwithstanding the flatteries of the historians and orators of his time, and notwithstanding the medals struck by

\* Diodorus Siculus, ii. 131; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10.

† Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10.

‡ Strabo, lib. xvi, p. 1092; Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10. The word is also variously written 'Homs' and 'Hims.'

§ Dion Cassius, lib. liii, p. 516.

|| Kalisch, *Genesis*, 244.

¶ Huct, *Histoire du Commerce et de la Navigation des Anciens*, cap. 50.

\*\* Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10; Strabo, lib. xvi, p. 1126. The whole expedition is there described at large by Strabo.

†† Kalisch, *Genesis*, 244.

him, did not subdue the Arabs,—the province of Arabia which he is credited with having added to the Roman empire, scarce reaching further than Arabia Petræa, or the mere skirts of the country.\* We are even told by one author† that this prince, marching against the Hagarens‡ who had revolted, met with such a reception that he was obliged to return without achieving anything. And thus have Jews and Babylonians, Persians and Abyssinians, Greeks, Romans, and other nations, all in turn made war upon these wild Children of Ishmael; but by no nation, however powerful and victorious, have they ever been permanently subdued. And in modern times, narratives both abundant and delightful have shewn that the Badawis have remained essentially unaltered since the periods when those ancient powers sought to bring them into subjection.§

Some of the Badawis have, it is true, been known at times to enlist in foreign armies, but only when by doing so they have been able to vent their national antipathy towards the Jews, or to serve temporarily some personal end of their own. Thus, some of them fought, both as foot-soldiers and as horsemen, in the legions of the Syrian kings, and sided with them in their protracted war against the Jews; and they had even spread beyond Dâmascus and the frontiers of Palestine, when they were repelled under Alexander the Maccabee.|| Indeed, though warlike and restless, yet there is evidence that they even carried on commerce in cattle, which they sent to the neighbouring countries. They were engaged in regular and active trade with Syria, Babylonia,

\* Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10.

† Xiphilius in his *Epitome* of Dion Cassius. Cnf. Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 10.

‡ An alternative name of the Ishmaelites, from their great ancestress.

§ Kalisch, *Genesis*, 224-5. On this whole subject the reader will find much interesting information in Power, *The Empire of the Musulmans in Spain and Portugal*, 23-4; The Four Treatises (Anon.), *Reflexions on Mahometanism*, 162; The *Christian Remembrancer* (Jan. 1855), 94; Newton, *Prophecies*, 24-28; Newman, *Historical Sketches*, i. 1-238; Freeman, *History and Conquests of the Saracens*, 21.

|| Kalisch, *Genesis*, 245.

and Egypt; yet even then they were more generally known by the sudden and formidable invasions with which they surprised and terrified the neighbouring nations. Thus does every addition to our knowledge concerning them confirm yet more strongly the fact that the statements and predictions of the portions of Scripture under review have been reduced to reality in actual experience.\*

As already pointed out, in speaking of the Arabs, a distinction must be made between the husbandmen and the shepherds. The former section of the people live always on the same soil, submit themselves to regular government, and enjoy something like a social state. Such are the inhabitants of Yaman, and the descendants of the ancient Arabian conquerors, who partly constitute the population of Syria, Egypt, and the States of Barbary.† The Badawis, on the other hand, or tribes of the Desert, are nomads and live in tents, and are hence called by ancient geographers 'Skenitæ.'‡ Like the Skythian hordes, they wander incessantly with their sheep, their horses, and their camels, in quest of the few spots of pasturage with which nature occasionally mitigates the dreariness of the plains.§ Not only are they found in the Deserts of Arabia, they even spread over the Asiatic and African worlds. But, like the Jews, they preserve everywhere and always their own peculiar language and customs. From the river Senegal to the Indus, from the Euphrates to Mosambique and Madagascar, the tribes of the Badawis, the pastoral Arabians, exist. But they everywhere maintain the character of their ancestors for fierceness and rapacity. In every country of the East where Arabs are found, they form a striking contrast to the native inhabitants.

\* Kalisch, *Genesis*, 245.

† Abu'l-Pharajius, 2—5; Volney, *Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte*, i. 345, etc.

‡ Newton, *Prophecies*, 23, 31; Pocock, *Specimen*, 37. In the words of Pliny,—Skenitæ, vagi, a tabernaculis (ἀπὸ τῶν σκηνῶν) cognominati, 'Skenites, wanderers,—so named from their dwelling in tents,' called σκηναί (skenai), in Greek. Cnf. Plinius, *Historia Naturalis*, lib. vi, cap. xxviii, sect. 32 (edn. Hardouin, Paris).

§ Mills, *History of Muhammedanism*, 3.

Palgrave assures us that genuine Badawis, like genuine Arabian coffee, are seldom if ever seen excepting by a stray traveller like himself who has the courage and the qualifications to run the gauntlet of the terrible Desert.\* Badawis of pure blood are seldom seen so far north as Syria and so far west as Egypt. A line drawn from Mount Sinai across to the Mouths of the Euphrates would form in a general way their most northerly boundary. They have a physiognomy which is not easily mistaken. Their brows are broad, though not low, and their faces narrow, though not long: their features are regular, and their eyes of a moderate size. Their eyes are full of vivacity, their speech is voluble and articulate, their deportment manly and dignified, their apprehension quick, their minds always present and attentive, while in the countenances even of the lowest among them, there appears a spirit of freedom. Considerable numbers of them are to be found in Egypt and in the territories bordering thereupon. But as an element of the population they are almost independent; for they are rather tributary allies than subjects of the ruling power. But their position as an element of the body politic of Egypt is altogether anomalous, and they are in many respects the most remarkable branch of the nation. On paying a certain tribute to Government, they are permitted to feed their flocks through the rich pasture-grounds of Egypt. But they frequently abuse this permission, and pillage without distinction both the husbandmen in the districts in which they encamp and the travellers who have the misfortune to fall into their hands. They are ready, too, to take part in the political dissensions which frequently arise there. But when the authorities attempt to punish them or to constrain them to their duty, they either defend themselves by force or retire into the Deserts till such time as they imagine their misdemeanours are forgotten. Independence renders them haughty and insolent; and their idle unsettled way of life, together with the poverty

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\* Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, ii, 163.

which naturally attends it, probably inspires that spirit of pillage by which they are so much distinguished.\*

Still keeping to the analogy of the wild ass, it may be further noted that the Badawis are divided into tribes, each of which chooses a leader,—the Shaikh (or Amîr), under whose direction they rob, fight, and rove about from place to place. These tribes are again subordinate to a great or general Shaikh who has authority over several tribes. In very early times they were divided into twelve chief tribes, each of which was under the presidency or headship of a Shaikh; and the centres of their encampments were the wells which they dug or the halting-places which they appointed. The existence of such tribal chiefs is frequently attested by Strabo, who calls them 'Phylarchs,' or rulers of tribes. Melo, also, quoted by Eusebius from Alexander Polyhistor, a heathen historian, relates that 'Abraham, of his Egyptian wife, begat twelve sons,† who, departing into Arabia, divided the region between them, and were the first kings of the inhabitants; whence even to our days the Arabians have twelve kings of the same names as the first.‡ Thus from the earliest times, through all the intervening ages down even to our own days, as all travellers have testified, these strange people have herded together in tribes, and have been governed by phylarchs.§ The only authority which the Badawî obeys is that of his Shaikh, whom he regards as the father rather than the ruler of his tribe. To him, accordingly, he yields ready submission, nor can anything shake his allegiance.||

\* Niebuhr, *Travels in Arabia*, i. 108; Mills, *History of Muhammedanism*, 3.

† He should, of course, have said rather,—One son who begat twelve sons.

‡ Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelica*, IX. xix. 421 (edn. Vigèr, Cologne, 1688).

§ Thevenot, I. ii. 32; Harris, *Voyages*, II. iii. 9; Newton, *Prophecies*, 21; Burckhardt, *Bedouins and Wahdys*, i. 116, et passim.

|| Taylor, *History of Mohammedanism*, 69. The reader who is interested in the subject of Shaikhs may find much that will prove valuable in his researches scattered up and down in the works of Niebuhr, Burckhardt, and Palgrave. The word 'Shaikh,' through the inadequacy of the English alphabet, is very variously spelt in English books. Niebuhr's spelling, 'Schieh'—with the *e* pronounced as in the French *mère*, and the *ch* as in the Scottish *loch*—comes very near the sound,—nearer, and less apt

It is the man who is himself the subject of misanthropy who lives in dread of the same thing from his fellow-men, while the benevolent and unsuspecting nature is at peace. With the wild and misanthropic disposition of Ishmael which his posterity inherit as they inherit the danger and desolation of the wilderness, they live still in sustained and irrational animosity with their fellow-men on every hand.\* To plunder whomsoever they can, they deem no crime; and they allege in vindication of this the dogma that Ishmael was turned out of his father's house, and received the wilderness as his inheritance, with permission to take whatever he might be able to take. The Badawî thus feels as free as the air, while he roves through illimitable deserts, and finds his delight in wandering in wild and unfettered liberty through the wastes that constitute his patrimony. Almost always on horseback, and armed with a lance, he ranges without prohibition from place to place,—the care of his cattle, and excursions for robbery or amusement, forming the beginning and the end of his employment.

The Badawîs are the outlaws among the nations. As little as the wild asses could they ever be subdued. Civilization, notwithstanding its endless comforts and reciprocities, they hate for its own sake. 'Saraceni nec amici vobis unquam, nec hostes optandi, ultro citroque discursantes, quidquid inveniri poterat momento temporis parvi vastabant. Omnes pari sorte sunt bellatores, per diversa reptantes in tranquillis vel turbidis rebus;

to mislead than the more usual spelling 'Sheykh.' We have adopted the plan of simple transliteration, leaving the sound to care for itself. To represent the proper sounds of Arabic words in Roman letters has ever been found to be a hopeless and thankless task.

\* No statements could be stronger than those of Burckhardt,—himself, as Muslims suppose, a co-religionist of theirs,—who records (*Arabia*, i. 129, and ii. 109, 129, 408) that plundering is in their code an honourable profession; and he sustains his assertion by narratives the perusal of which make a Christian mind sicken with despair. Still more emphatic and overwhelming, if possible, is the testimony of Palgrave,—a traveller who brought to his task an education surpassed by that of none of his predecessors, and a spirit of charity and gentleness that gives overpowering weight to his testimony:—Cnf. *Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 223, et passim.

nec quidem aliquando, sed erant semper per spatia longe lateque distenta, sine lare sine sedibus fixis aut legibus.\* Thus have they both successfully defied the softening influence of civilization and mocked the attacks of the invader. For them alone, of all the nations of the earth, time seems to have no sickle, and the conqueror's sword no edge. They may be hunted like game, but they cannot be caught. The waste tracks shunned by other nations are their terrestrial paradise. Liberty is the very atmosphere they breathe; indeed, the love of liberty is frequently carried by them to the utmost pitch of unbridled ferocity. They are noted not so much for habits of murder as for quarrelsomeness and plundering; but upon slight occasion they are ready to proceed to extremes and to take life. Their power of endurance is almost exhaustless, and serves vividly to recal the memory of the wild ass; indeed, the indomitable love of liberty in them leads them to habitual feats of endurance. They court danger for its own sake, and they revel in the excitement of combat and pursuit. Like the wild ass, if the Badawî were captured and thrown into servitude, he would either break the yoke, or perish in the attempt to break it. He could not have been better compared than with the wild ass, which delights in the rough and hardy independence of its native deserts, and is easily satisfied with the scanty food furnished by those inhospitable regions. They neither covet wealth, nor tempt the conqueror's avarice, for their wants are but few, and riches would be an encumbrance. Even the Shaikh is not unfrequently one of the poorest of the tribe he heads, so little do considerations of wealth influence their estimate of men. Roaming and ungovernable, they obey no law but the promptings of their own adventurous spirit, regarding all mankind as their enemies whom they must either attack with their spears or clude with their faithful steeds, and cherishing their deserts as heartily as they despise the restraint of civilized towns. Nor is this condition of things limited to their bearing

\* Ammianus Marcellinus. *Historia*, I. xiv. 4.

towards foreign peoples, for however united they may to the view of the outsider appear as a nation, they nevertheless present the spectacle of a house divided against itself,—the several tribes maintaining the most inveterate and interminable feuds with one another. ‘In the Desert,’ says a proverb of theirs, ‘everybody is everybody else’s enemy’,—thus expressing, merely in other language, the sense of the text,—‘His hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.’

The fact of the Badawis having never, as a nation, been conquered, must not be misunderstood or attributed to the wrong cause. It cannot be owing to overpowering numbers, for population never can be great in a land where the means of subsistence are so precarious and so few, and withal so difficult of acquisition. Of course, the population cannot be ascertained: it is roughly conjectured by some at a half-a-million, and by others at a million and a half. But it is not difficult to assign their invincibility to its proper cause; it is but the natural result of conditions and circumstances. A nomadic population, thinly scattered over a large and open space of meagre pasture-land, will always be unconquered, for it presents no adequate return for the trouble and cost. When a tribe is on its way across the Desert, pursuit is difficult; and even if the fugitives were overtaken, they would be found to be possessed of nothing to repay the trouble of the pursuit. It may be worth the while of such people to occasionally plunder one another; but it can never be worth the while of any foreign power to plunder them, still less to subdue them. They do not live in houses or cities, and they have no standing or landed property,—nothing but their tents and flocks. Here lies the whole secret of their imagined independence. Destitute of trade, wealth, and national aspiration, they are no prey for conquest. Their uncivilized disposition and the dreary barrenness of their territory, have ever proved safer barriers to their freedom than the ships, and fortresses, and diplomacy of civilized peoples.



But the principle of analogy must not be misunderstood if we are concerned in the present enquiry to advance the interests of truth. We use the term in the sense of resemblance of relations, and not in the sense of resemblance in mere particulars. Thus, 'his hand will be against every man' is language that is in no sense true of the wild ass, for he flees from the presence of human kind. Yet the principle that leads to his thus taking flight is the principle where the true analogy might be found,—the principle of *wildness*: The text is paraphrased by the learned Bochart in the words '*Tam ferus quam onager*,' 'as wild as the wild ass.\*' What in the wild ass we call merely aversion to the human species, we call in the case of the Ishmaelite misanthropy. In this matter of aversion to human society beyond his own clan or race, he resembles with all fidelity the creature mentioned in the prediction. The language just cited from that prediction forms only an additional element in the case, and shews that over and above the untameableness of the wild ass, there would be in the posterity of Ishmael the added bitterness of the hostility of man to man. What measure of truth there is in this will be apprehended when it is remembered that though the Badawis are comparatively few in number, they are yet the terror of every man, nor can even the most fearless of travellers afford to venture unarmed within their reach. The style of talk in which the fashionable writers of the hour delight might lead the uninitiated to suppose that Islâm, if not better than Christianity, is quite as good, and is productive of results at least equally good. They write as if the Arabs were at the summit of culture, and as if the Badawis were as loving and gentle as sucking doves. Let a party of explorers make for the heart of Arabia, armed even with the credentials of the Royal Geographical Society, and let that Society think itself well off if but one of the members of such an expedition returns to tell the tale of the charity and the culture that are bred of the religion

\* Chf. p. 142.

of Muḥammad.\* Let them try it among the Wahhābīs of Najd, among whom the doctrines of the founder are held in their greatest simplicity. But they might save their friends from the possible contingencies of such an expedition by a perusal of the pages of the latest traveller in those regions. But the amateur critics whose contact with living Muḥammadanism is as yet an affair of the imagination only, are, as a general rule, not made of the stuff that could lead them to patiently plod through the thoughtful and matter-of-fact pages of Palgrave.

Nor is this misanthropy confined to considerations of nationality or religious creed. They are as truly the foes of the Arabian pilgrim to the Shrine of Islām as to the curious English traveller. It matters little to them whether their victim be an adherent of their own Faith or of the despised and alien faith of the Nazarene,—their hand is 'against every man.' Those of them who live nearest the outskirts of civilization, and who are brought in some measure under its influence, soon reveal how thin is the veil and how imperfect is the cure. The following instance in point is given by Niebuhr. He and one of his fellow-travellers made an excursion to the Pyramids; and for their greater security they adopted a plan which is commonly held to be the safe one,—they made a compact with a Shaikh whom they hired for their guidance and protection. They soon had experience of the fallacy. 'Setting out from Geesh we met two Bedouins on horse-back whom we hired to guide and escort us. Just as we reached the foot of the Pyramids we observed an Arab riding up to us at full gallop. He was a young Schiech, and behaved at first to us with great civility. But he soon changed his tone, threatened us with his lance, and ordered us to give him money before we quitted the spot. Upon Mr. Forskal's refusing to comply with so insolent a demand, the Schiech seized

\* Strikingly confirmatory of this is the deplorable and untimely end of the lamented Professor Palmer and his companions, whom the best of credentials, learning and kindness, and abundant money, all proved unavailing to save from a fate too awful to be contemplated.

his turban, and held his pistol to my breast when I offered to defend my friend. The two Bedouins, our guides, made no attempt to interpose, either out of respect to the Schiech, or from natural perfidy.\* We were at last obliged to gratify the robber. Another time we returned better attended; but this did not hinder the Arabs from gathering about us, and stealing whatever they could lay their hands on unobserved.† To make terms with them is as when the kid made terms with the wolf. They cannot stand civilization; to them it is at the best but a thin covering, and the 'wild' nature soon reveals itself. They differ in nothing from other men, excepting that they are 'wild'; the element of untameableness is in their nature, and it is as incurable as the same element in the nature of the tiger or of the crocodile. All the world has been moving forward in the march of civilization and participating in its benefits. Even the wild Fijians, New Zealanders, Hottentots, and North American Indians, catch the influence and to some extent at least rise with the tide,—abandoning by degrees the symbols of their hereditary degradation, and taking their place among the beneficiaries of the general progress. But the Badawi remains the same he always was from the beginning, and is no more improved in any respect than the 'wild ass' who shares with him the stagnant desolation of the Desert. The thoughts and enterprises which captivate and absorb other men have no interest for him. He is no more touched by the countless influences of civilization than if he were himself the wild ass of the wilderness whose counterpart he is declared to be. He is the enemy of every man who has shared the general advancement of the race, and all attempts to make him a better man have utterly and hopelessly failed.‡ The language in which the Divine Being raised an impassable

\* That they were fellow-clansmen or accomplices is neither an impossible nor an uncharitable supposition.

† Niebuhr, *Travels in Arabia*, i. 109.

‡ Porter, *Travels in Georgia*, 304; Keith, *Evidence of Prophecy*, 518.

barrier between the man and the serpent might have been uttered with equal truth to the mother of Ishmael—'I will put enmity between thy seed and hers.' The latest notices of them in the books of such travellers as Niebuhr, Burckhardt, Burton, and Palgrave, correspond entirely with the earliest, however remote. To them the Desert is the world. The events of contemporaneous history, so full of absorbing interest to other men, are nothing to *them*. So severed are they from the comity of nations that the world is not bettered by them, nor they by the world. For all the purposes of cosmopolitanism, the posterity of Ishmael might just as well have been for the last forty centuries the occupants of another globe. *wild (man)*

We would not be understood to say that the Ishmaelitic character corresponds in every minute particular to that of the wild ass. Enough has already been said to shew that we hold no such opinion. The general resemblance, however, even in point of detail, is so striking that it cannot fail to attract notice. This is our apology for so long and minute an account as must appear to be almost a digression from the general drift of the argument. But our concern has been to place as many as possible of the details before the reader, and then to leave him to make whatever use of them his judgment may dictate. With so many examples on record of the danger of seeking among one's own contemporaries identifications of Scripture characters, we would earnestly avoid pressing the principle of analogy in all details. Examples of the danger we would keep clear of occur chiefly in the domain of unfulfilled prophecy, where the method to which we allude has generally led to the complete exposure of the fallacy by the all-revealer, Time. The evil has for the most part arisen from pressing too closely minute points of detail. Happily we have not to deal here with a question of unfulfilled prophecy, but with simple historical fact. In our own judgment, the main point, as far as the analogy of the ass is concerned is the *wildness*; and then, secondly, as far as

the latter part of the verse is concerned, the aversion to social order and urbanity, and to amicity to the requirements of public safety and good fellowship. To find close analogy in every particular is not necessary to the vindication of the truth of the angel's words. No comparison ever went on all fours. If we can shew that the Badawî has hitherto proved untameable, we shall have done all that analogy in the present case requires,—he is the man.

History overflows with narratives proving the identity of the Badawîs with the kind of character spoken of by the angel. The wilds of Arabia are still, as of old, their chosen habitation; and uncompanionable, abandoned, and lawless as they are, such exclusion from the precincts of civilized humanity is the only fitting place and portion for them. They pursue no such calling as might confine them to one place and bring them into civilized relations to their fellow-men, or such as might make one tribe of them in any way dependent on one another, such as agriculture. This is attested by ancient writers no less than modern.\* They thus have had provided for them from the first, by an inscrutable Providence, a natural sphere in which they can more easily cherish the ferocity of their nature, and can do so with a minimum of damage to their fellow-men. We now leave the reader to apply the principle of analogy as he thinks fit, satisfied if we have but succeeded in shewing that the language of the prophecy given before the birth of Ishmael has been fulfilled in him and his posterity, and how truly that language describes the weird creatures who even to the present moment roam the Desert after the manner of their father Ishmael, and glory in their paternity.†

\* Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historia*, lib. XIV, cap. iv, pag. 14 (edn. Valesius, Paris, 1681); Harris, *Voyages*, II, ii. 9.

† We may here remark that the best account of the Badawîs is that of Burckhardt. It is the most careful, accurate, and full. Niebuhr, forty years before him, and Burton, forty years after him, have given each of them an account of his own, and their writings have each a peculiar charm; but they amount merely to a corroboration of the very learned and judicious descriptions given by the lamented Swiss.

x wise

In bringing this part of our subject to a close we feel that we cannot do better than quote, with a few alterations, the language of one already more than once summoned to give evidence in the present enquiry. Speaking of the irrational misanthropy of the Ishmaelitic character, Dr. Arnold says,—The Word of Jehovah thus set forth the future character of the wild man Ishmael, and that of his posterity. Out of all the nations of antiquity, only those descended from these two sons of Abraham have entirely preserved their nationality. The Phœnicians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians, clear as were the marks they respectively made on the history of the world, have either altogether disappeared, or exist only in degenerated fragments. The Chinese and Hindûs remain only in two great masses, inert and torpid, their ancient vigour having utterly decayed. They have, moreover, mixed with other nations who have successively conquered them, each wave of foreign conquest having left its own deposit on the native soil. Even the Greek and Roman nations, notwithstanding their marvellous strength of character, have participated in the general decadence, for the Greeks and Romans of the present day are essentially different from those of the classic times. But to this day the posterity of Isaac and the posterity of Ishmael stand before the world as two separate nations, unchanged from what they were in the pristine ages of their existence, retaining still not only their ancient manners and customs to an extent truly remarkable, but what is still more wonderful,—their distinctive peculiarities of character.

As to the matter of *nationality* both of these nations preserve the distinctive characteristics of the ancient members of their respective races. The Ishmaelites cling to the hostile

There is an admirable article on the subject, given by another traveller, Palgrave, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, s. v. ARABIA (9th edn.). The curious reader may consult with great advantage the charming account of these wierd creatures in *Travels in Central and Eastern Arabia* by this last-named writer. We are greatly indebted, also, to the articles in *The Dictionary of the Bible*, by Dr. William Smith, and to the exquisite *Commentaries* of Dr. Kalisch.

and nomadic habits of their particular patriarch, and up to this day they follow exactly the same rude and natural mode of life that existed among them nearly four thousand years ago. They prefer the wild and independent life of the Desert to the comforts and conveniences of a civilized state, and no foreign power has been able to impose upon them new manners and customs,—a fact without parallel in the history of nations. The amalgamation of the Jews with other nations makes their case seem even more wonderful still. That the Ishmaelites should have preserved their independence and nationality in their Desert wilds is less surprising than that the Hebrews should have continued a separate people after having been dispersed and persecuted from eighteen to four-and-twenty centuries among all the nations of the earth. But the reason is not far to seek,—the Jews accommodate themselves easily to the strangers among whom they dwell. In them we perceive a finer and more delicate shade of nationality than among the descendants of Ishmael; they are more flexible and of a less untractable spirit; and yet while adapting themselves very much to the nations with which they mingle, they do so without endangering the obliteration of their national character.

Equally wonderful is it to note how the respective mental and spiritual peculiarities of these extraordinary peoples still mark them out for observation. The religious peculiarity of the Jewish type of mind is a blind adhesion to the traditions of their ancestors, as also to the mere letter of the Old Testament, which has virtually become a sealed Book to them. That same blind adhesion to ecclesiastical tradition marks also the other branch of the Abrahamic family. Pre-eminently believing, rather than religious, both Ishmaelites and Jews pride themselves on the fact that they accept without enquiry whatever has been handed down to them through the accepted ecclesiastical channels, and they regard this uninquiring temper as a praiseworthy feature; and yet they subject to the narrowest scrutiny and suspicion

every new truth that claims their credence. Yet with all the exclusiveness, blindness, and fixity which characterize these peoples in common, there is an egotism and an indomitable love of freedom about the Ishmaelite that is missing in the case of the Jew. This temper of mind proved to be the very soil for the growth of Islām.

It is these intellectual features of theirs that account, in no small degree, for the rejection, by these peoples, of the teachings of Christianity, and account for their deadly opposition to it. As the heirs of Abrahamic instincts, they both of them inherit pretty much the same class of prejudices to the revelation laid before the world by the Son of God. And in a religious point of view we may safely take the typical Muḥammadan as representing the literal descendant of Ishmael. He is acquainted with some of the leading facts of the Book of God, and is therefore harder to convince of his errors than the idolater who is totally ignorant of Divine revelation. After having corrupted what he has borrowed from the Bible, the Muslim, like Ishmael, 'mocks' at the uncorrupted truth of God. Inflated with a gross superstition, wild fanaticism, and inconceivable pride, egoism, and self-satisfaction, and withal possessed of a special animosity against the truth of Christ, the Muḥammadan is, humanly speaking, more difficult to convert than even the Jew.\* It is this animosity against the Christ of the Gospel that leads to Muḥammadanism being, like Romanism, a distinctly persecuting agency. It is the true spirit of Antichrist,—a spirit of persecution on account of religious conviction. Those systems make no allowance for differences of intellectual constitution and prepossession; they shew no quarter to the doubtful and hesitant,—'submit or suffer' is the war-cry of them both. 'As then he that was born after

\* Arnold, *Islām and Christianity*, p. 13; Osborn, *Islām under the Arabs*, 96. The reader will find in Palgrave (*Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 68 seqq.) some very suggestive thoughts on this subject of the credulity of the Arab mind. The views given above regarding the comparison of Islām with Judaism, in their practical effect on the mind, are borne out by one of the ablest writers of our time, Dr. Marcus Dods, in *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 121 (edn. Lond, 1877). A



the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.' The self-complacent and overbearing spirit attributed to Ishmael in regard to the Child of Promise, is thus the heritage of his natural and ecclesiastical progeny to this moment. *عن أبيه*.

The spirit of Ishmael is thus not confined to the Badawis nor circumscribed within the limits of the Arabian deserts. The spirit of Ishmael is the spirit of Islām, and is found in the heart of every true Muslim the world over. With all the diversity of national characteristics and of individual disposition, with all those differences which arise from education, social status, and personal prejudices, together with those which arise from the almost endless diversities of religious belief that are to be found among the followers of Muḥammad, wherever the genuine Muslim is found he is found to be possessed of the spirit of Ishmael. It may be concealed with a veil of politeness, or covered with the glamour of officialism or of circumstance. But 'scratch him',—and you will find him an Ishmaelite; and the sincerer he is in his religious creed, the more bitter will be his misanthropy and the more rankling his sarcasm. And Muḥammadans find palliation for all this aversion to their follow-men in the irrational dogma of fatalism.\* They interpret the prediction of the angel as not only a prophecy but also a predetermination of the good Father of the human race. There was to be perpetual enmity both between Ishmael and Isaac, and also between their respective descendants to the end of time. The implacable bitterness, hostility, and rancour which possessed the mind of Muḥammad towards the followers of Moses and of Christ, and which have ever possessed the minds of his adherents, is merely, say they, the natural and proper fulfilment of the prediction of the good angel of God. That a Being so good and merciful as the com-

\* Osborn, Palgrave, and Emanuel Deutsch, in their works, so frequently cited, speak emphatically of this principle of Fatalism (excluding, as it does, all the inspiration of hope) as the evil genius of Muḥammad's system, and as tending, more than anything else, to bring about its disintegration and decay.

mon Father is in the experience of us all, should deliberately and of set purpose have designed that mutual affection and allegiance should be for ever banished from the two great families of 'the seed of Abraham His friend,' and give place to mutual slaughter and irreconcilable hate, awakens within them no perplexity, no misgiving, no sense of the incongruous or the impossible. And truly the teachings and spirit of the Qur'an, and indeed the entire history of the Muslim race, demonstrate how truly the closing words of the prediction describe, not only the character of Ishmael's natural offspring, but also of his ecclesiastical descendants all the world over and in every age.

Thus much for the predictions that preceded the birth of Ishmael; we will now turn to those that were given regarding him subsequently to that event.

The first was made to Abraham. It occurs in GEN. xvii. 20, and reads thus,—

'And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.\*

Similarly, in GEN. xxi. 13 God again reveals to the patriarch His purpose concerning Ishmael, where He says,—

'And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.†

\* Fuller, *Works*, 378; Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 432. Muhammadans of the Shi'a sect sometimes contend that the passage contains allusion to the twelve Imáms whom those of their sect acknowledge as the rightful Successors of Muhammad. By thus availing themselves of the fragile and hazardous argument from a mere coincidence of numbers, they lose sight of the fact that the larger number of their co-religionists reject their twelve Imáms, that the promise was made not in reference to any member of the posterity of Ishmael, but in reference to Ishmael himself, and that it was actually fulfilled in his lifetime. The believers in the twelve Imáms are mainly the Muhammadans of Persia. Muhammadans of Turkey, India, Arabia, Egypt (and Africa generally) belong, with comparatively few exceptions, to one or other of the four great schools of the Sunnis. Cuf. Wolff, *Travels and Adventures*, 213.

† Fuller, *Works*, 384.

In the same strain the narrative goes on in *vv.* 17, 18, where we read,—

‘And God heard the voice of the lad. And the angel called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her,—What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand, for I will make him a great nation.’\*

In the second of these passages two important truths are embodied which Muslims, of course, find it convenient to overlook. In the first place, the passage makes it evident that the son of Hagar was not the Child of Promise, but that the promise appertained to another who was yet unborn. In the second place, the passage teaches that the reason why the angel appeared on this occasion to Hagar was, not that her child was the Child of Promise, but that of the child who was born of her, Abraham was the father,—‘Because he is thy seed.’ The fact that the angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar did not shew that the promise ‘Sarah shall have a son’ was revoked; it was rather a proof of God’s compassion towards her who had been the victim of Sarah’s unreasonable displeasure, and of His mindfulness that even the son who should be born of the bondwoman stood in close natural relationship to Abraham His ‘friend.’ ‘The promise’ had been made to Abraham before the birth of Ishmael, and after his birth some thirteen years had passed away before any further intimation concerning the birth of a son to Sarah was vouchsafed;—‘the promise’ was then repeated. It was clear enough that Abraham had at length a son in his old age; but the absence of all celestial congratulation or celestial allusion to the matter, rendered it equally clear that this at least was not the child referred to in ‘the promise.’ And the *repetition* of ‘the promise’ so many years after Ishmael’s birth, should of itself alone be sufficient to decide the whole question. Meanwhile the advanced age of the patriarchal pair rendered the fulfilment of

\* Cnf. Fuller, *Works*, 384.

'the promise' more problematical every day. To all human appearance Sarah had been 'written childless;' and in a fit of despondency she had abdicated her rightful position in favour of her slave-girl.\*

These are all the promises and predictions given under Divine authority in reference to Ishmael. Their fulfilment is recorded in GEN. xxv. 12—16, where we read,—

'Now, these are the generations of Ishmael,† Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham. And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations:—the first born of Ishmael, Nebajoth,‡ and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, and Mishmah, and Dumah, and Massa, and Hadar,§ and Tema, and Jetur, and Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns and by their castles;—*twelve princes* according to their nations.¶ (This list of names is given again in I CHRON. i. 29—31.)

It is maintained by some Muḥammadans that the 'twelve princes' here again mentioned were the twelve Imāms.¶ This, however, is merely a matter of interpretation, the unsoundness of which we have already pointed out. The point which it is to our purpose to mark is that the prediction regarding the greatness of Ishmael's posterity has been fulfilled.

Such is the record contained in the Taurāt of the fulfilment of the promises made by God in relation to Ishmael. The pro-

\* Priaulx, *Questiones Mosæicae*, 364 seqq.

† It is evident that this account of 'the generations of Ishmael' is added in this place for the purpose of bringing the narrative of the history of Abraham appropriately to a close, and to shew that the promise respecting Ishmael (ch. xvii. 20) was in due time fulfilled. Cnf. The *Annotated Paragraph Bible* (R. T. S.) in loc.

‡ Alternative forms of this word are Nebaioth and Nabit.—Cnf. ISA. ix. 7, and Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Art. NEBAIOTH.

§ An alternative form of this word is Hadad.—Cnf. I. CHRON. i. 46, and Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Artt. HADAD and HADAR.

¶ Fuller, *Works*, 391.

¶ The names of the twelve Imāms of the Shi'as will be found in Wolff, *Journal*, iv. 393.

mises relating to him must have already begun to be realized at the time the Book of GENESIS was written or compiled.\* This is evident from the fact that the compiler of that Book says, speaking in the past tense, regarding the immediate descendants of Ishmael,—‘They dwelt from Havilah unto Shur.’† It is interesting to note at how early a period the predictions concerning him began to be fulfilled. These fruitful tribes extended at first along the frontier of Arabia from the northern extremity of the Red Sea towards the mouths of the Euphrates. By the word ‘towns’ we are to understand, probably, moveable villages of tents, while the ‘castles’ are probably fortified folds for protection in time of war.‡ The immediate descendants of Ishmael appear to have occupied each a separate district, and to have followed a nomad life in moveable encampments, with here and there a fortified place as a refuge for their cattle. They also practised merchandise, and became wealthy and powerful.§ They were not only the fathers of families, but also the founders of potent tribes.|| Nothing short of Divine prescience could have predicted the remarkable nomadic and predatory habits which Ishmael and his posterity through successive ages would adopt, and which were the less to be expected in that his mother belonged to a civilized and settled nation. The prophecy that Ishmael would be ‘a wild man’ has been very strikingly fulfilled in the history of the various tribes of Arabs, many of whom are descended from him, and who have even to the present day remained a fierce, hardy, distinct, and unsubdued race, subsisting chiefly by plunder.

\* Priaulx, *Questiones Mosaicae*, 402.

† GEN. xxv. 18. Cnf. Newton, *Prophecies*, 24.

‡ ‘Castles,’ so called, are still found in many parts of Arabia, especially at some of the haltingplaces along the Hajj routes. In times of commotion, as at the Wahhâbi invasion carried on at the beginning of the present century, these places are used for the ordinary purposes of war; but in time of peace they are used as storehouses for supplying the needs of the Caravans of the yearly Hajj.

§ Mun, *Life of Mahomet*, i. p. cxi.

|| Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 386.

The fulfilment of these promises has thus been going on through all the intermediate ages, and reaches even to the present day in the great Ishmaelitish or Arabian race.\*

This part of our subject has been very fully treated by a legion of writers on both sides of the controversy. And the works of Forster, Muir, Kalisch, and Sayyid Aḥmad Khān may be generally taken as gathering up the results of the investigations. But the subject of the present enquiry—namely, as to the claims of Ishmael to be considered the Child of Promise, as opposed to Isaac—is one that is not vitally affected by the questions they have discussed. On one essential point they are all agreed—namely, that the promises made concerning Ishmael have been fulfilled. The difficulties in dispute among them arise almost entirely from the impossibility of settling at this distance of time the identity of certain names of places and persons. There is no trustworthy history sufficiently old to afford them any real help, excepting the Scriptures of the Jews. A large number of traditions exist among Muḥammadans; but nearly the whole of these originated as lately as since the time of Muḥammad, and sprang out of the exigencies of controversy. They are therefore not historical,—as Muḥammadans like Sayyid Aḥmad admit when they reject them.† Yet such is the strange fatuity that is always the concomitant of the acceptance of the Islāmic faith, that whenever the Jewish Scriptures happen not to agree with Muslim traditions, the Muḥammadan regards the rejection and vilification of those Scriptures as the thing incumbent upon him.‡ We have never met with a single instance in which an adherent of the Muslim faith has accepted the statements of the Jewish Scriptures as against what he would himself acknowledge to be one of the most recent and untrustworthy of Islāmic traditions.

Every reader of history is aware of the exceeding multitude of the progeny of Ishmael; and stories of their determined and

\* Newton, *Prophecies*, 20—3.

† Conf. p. 115.

‡ Conf. p. 46.

indomitable character abound in all ages from the time of Ishmael's immediate offspring till now. Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, have all tried among the Arabs their skill in the art of conquest; and when the surly Arab has been beaten from the cities nearest to civilized life, and even Makka itself has fallen into the hands of the invader, he has retired to the solitude of the Desert, and has dwelt there in safety. All this is merely the fulfilment of the Word of God. It is not necessary to affirm that the promise 'Unto thy seed will I give it' referred exclusively to the seed of Abraham through Isaac; for the term 'thy seed' involved other sons than Isaac, and other races than Israelites. And for the same reason is it unnecessary to affirm that the phraseology referred exclusively to Ishmael and his posterity. As a matter of fact, the inhabitants of the whole of those territories over which Abraham was directed to look, are to this day descendants of his through Ishmael, through Isaac, and through Keturah. We are not concerned here to follow out the matter in all its detail. It is enough for the present purpose if we are able to recall to the mind of the reader sufficient of historical fact to shew that the promise of the Almighty as it related to Ishmael has really been fulfilled.

But when we thus admit that God made promise to Abraham and Hagar concerning their son, it is necessary that the Muslim guard against the inference that the promise thus made was a prophecy concerning the Messiahship of any of Ishmael's offspring. Of course, a promise by its very nature implies futurity; but the mere fact of God's making a revelation concerning a man's future does not of necessity imply that the portion of that man is one to be desired, nor that he is in any particular sense an object of the Divine complacency. It is sufficient to know that the promise actually made was fulfilled to the letter. Ishmael and his descendants have been 'wild' men. By a strange fatality, the spirit of strife, robbery, and even of bloodthirstiness, has continued among them all along the ages. No mention was

made in 'the promise' of the world being *blessed* by Hagar's offspring. It was merely a promise designed to comfort her in her disconsolate and desolate condition, as she sat there by the highway in the wilderness. Nor does 'the promise' contain any allusion to any such circumstance as that of her son being a *prophet*, though the opinion that he was a prophet is one of the cardinal points of Islâm.\* Nor does 'the promise' contain the dimmest intimation that any prophet was at any time to arise from among his descendants. It says merely that he would be the father of 'twelve princes,' or head-men of tribes, and that God would make of him 'a great nation.' And though the Muslim reply that pillage was not confined to Arabia, such a reply does not logically affect the awkwardness of his position. It cannot be denied that nowhere is that heartless and brutal profession carried on so systematically, relentlessly, and universally as in that unhappy country. So much indeed is this cruel and inhuman business the national characteristic of the descendants of Ishmael, that no traveller in Arabia or in regions contiguous to it is safe unless he make due provision before setting out, against those perils which the cruelty of savage Arabians, professing the Muslim creed, will almost certainly occasion in the course of his journeyings. At no moment of the day or night can he venture to indulge in a feeling of safety and repose. So true is this that in the literature of all travellers the term '*Bedawin*' is synonymous with '*highway robber and murderer*.'† And the Persians, their nearest neighbours, have in their literature also, designated them by a name of similar import. But the seed of the Child of Promise was to bring blessing to 'all families of the earth!'

We have thus noted the promises made by God concerning

\* To this point we shall need to refer more in detail on a subsequent page.

† Palgrave (*Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 3, and in many other places) shews that the 'good faith' with which *Badawis* are usually credited, is greatly exaggerated. The experience of Niebuhr and his companions, noted on p. 172, is strikingly confirmatory of this.



Ishmael. But Muhammadans are apt to lose sight of the circumstance that He made promises concerning Isaac also.

A careful comparison of the wording of the promises made by Jehovah in reference to the one child with the wording of those concerning the other, will shew a surprising contrast. In GEN. xvii. 19—21 we read,—

‘And God said,—Sarah thy wife shall of a truth bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac. And I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee. Behold I have blessed him and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.\* But My covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee this set time next year.†

The circumstances under which these words were uttered are of importance to our subject. In *ver.* 16 God had said concerning Sarah,—

‘And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be (a mother) of nations: kings of people shall be of her.‡

The emotions that were awakened in the mind of the aged patriarch on hearing these words are indicated in the verse which immediately follows;—

‘Then Abraham fell upon his face and laughed, and said in his heart,—Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah who is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God,—Oh that Ishmael might live§ before Thee!||

The state of emotion which these words indicate is accounted for by the fact that never till now had Abraham been told that he should have a child by *Sarah*. Ishmael was still residing in the family; and for aught that appears, the patriarch does not

\* Cnf. p. 179.

† Fuller, *Works*, 378.

‡ Priaulx, *Questions Mosaique*, 400; Fuller, *Works*, 378.

§ ‘Live’;—The word ‘life,’ in the language of the inspired writers, often including, in fact, all good.—Cnf. 2 PET. i. 3.

|| Priaulx, *Questions Mosaique*, 402; Fuller, *Works*, 378.

seem to have doubted that this was the Child of Promise. His laughter on the occasion, does not of necessity imply either scorn or unbelief,—qualities which appear not to have been ingredients of the patriarch's nature. His true character at this period of his life is thus attested by Paul, in ROM. iv. 19—22,—

‘And being not weak in faith,\* he considered not his own body now dead when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God,† and was fully assured that what He had promised He was able also to perform.

And therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness.’

The period of life thus indicated, together with Sarah's condition of natural decay, shew clearly that the praise thus accorded to the faith of Abraham had reference to this very occasion on which he is said to have ‘laughed.’ It would therefore be doing him very serious injustice if we were to suppose that his laughter was the laughter of disbelief or of derisive contempt. Rather it was a laughter that implied an emotion of surprise,—not unmingled, probably, with something of sudden bewilderment and gratitude. This is a state of mind which might well have been occasioned by the facts of the patriarch's case; for ‘the promise’ had been first made some seventeen years previously, the patriarchal pair were already ‘past age,’ and a son *had* been born to Abraham after the promise had been made. Similar emotions appear to have been awakened on a subsequent occasion in the mind of Sarah also; and the memory of the coincidence would seem to have been intentionally perpetuated in the name afterwards prescribed by Jehovah for their son.

The language of the passage, and more especially of *ver.* 18, seems to indicate the existence of a desire in the mind of the patriarch that the covenant might be considered as already ful-

\* ‘Not weak in faith’,—but, on the contrary, ‘strong in faith,’ and that to a remarkable degree, as the writer goes on to shew.

† ‘Giving glory to God’;—That is, honouring, with his practical confidence, God's faithfulness and power.

filled in the birth of Ishmael. At any rate, it indicates a very natural wish on his part that Ishmael, his only son, and the child of his old age, might at least not be overlooked, but might if possible be a sharer of the blessing. But the circumstances of Ishmael's birth were such as could not receive the blessing of the full and unqualified approval of the Almighty. If the Divine resources are to be taxed at all, they must be taxed by some greater exigency than the age of Sarah. And the response vouchsafed by God to the patriarch's plea on behalf of Ishmael, shews that the miracle was to be really as great as the aged pair had originally supposed. Jehovah was not driven to the necessity of recognizing in so grave a matter the offspring of a connexion which was attributable rather to an evil custom of the heathen than to any design or ordinance of the Great Ruler.\* Hence is the promise 'Sarah shall have a son,' hereafter thrice reiterated to the patriarch. Notwithstanding 'the deadness of Sarah's womb,' the original promise was to be literally fulfilled,—without compromise and without fail. It is accordingly made clear at the interview recorded in these verses, that much as God might bless Ishmael in consideration of his being the child of Abraham, yet THE COVENANT had reference to the son yet unborn, and to him absolutely and exclusively. So explicit indeed is Jehovah in anticipating any confusion that might in future arise in regard to these two children, that He even goes on to specify the time of Isaac's birth,—and this, be it observed, while Ishmael is yet in his father's house,—'My covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee this set time next year.'

This is the son concerning whom the Almighty, speaking to Abraham many years afterwards, said,—

'Because thou hast not withheld thy son, thy *only* son,  
from Me.'

What could be more startling than such a description of Isaac,—

\* See *Questiones Mosaicæ*, by Osmond de Beauvoir Priaux, 364.

from a quarter from which there is no appeal! Looked at in its literality, it is simply not true; and the inference suggested is that in the Divine economy, primogeniture does not necessarily involve priority in rank and blessing. At least, the passage fixes, beyond possibility of recall, the question of the heirship of Isaac. Even if the difficulty about the passage be real, and not apparent merely, we are not called upon to solve it. It is sufficient for the purpose of the present argument, that the Almighty Himself here sets aside all considerations of literality, in His solicitude (so to speak) to identify to Abraham the Child of Promise. Lane indicates his opinion in a somewhat important interpolation: thus, in Sûra xxi (AMBIYÂ) 72, we read,—

و هَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً

which Sale translates,—

‘And we bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, as an additional gift.’

This is a literal and uninterpolated rendering. But Lane is not satisfied with it, so he amplifies his translation almost into a paraphrase, thus—

‘And when Abraham had asked a son, we gave him Isaac and Jacob, as an additional gift, beyond what he had asked, being a son’s son.’\*

The ‘additional gift’ was, of course, Jacob. Lane here understands the author of the Qur’ân to mean that this son and grandson were given in response to the patriarch’s petition,—a petition which ignored the fact that the wish had already been met in the bestowment of Ishmael many years previously. The effect of this interpolation is to shew that Abraham laboured under very serious misgiving as to the fact of Ishmael being, after all, the Heir of the Promise. If Lane’s interpolation be admissible, the testimony even of the Qur’ân itself may be cited in support of this same thought—namely, the preferability of Isaac, as compared with Ishmael, on the ground of legitimacy. But we do not

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kur-ân*, 148 (edn. 1843), Poole’s edn. 1879, p. 70.

ground our argument on this interpolation of Lane's, nor even avail ourselves of the corroboration it affords of the argument. Though we might with some reason do so, seeing that this learned author is often quoted by the apologists of Islâm as a model of what all cool and dispassionate exponents of that system ought to be.

It is important to note the effect on the argument, of the repetition of the promise of 'blessing.' In GEN. xviii. 17, 18 we read,—

'And Jehovah said,—Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do,—seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?\*

This was before the birth of Ishmael. Compare with this the promise recorded in GEN. xxii. 18, where we read,—

'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice.†

This promise was given by Jehovah many years later, on the occasion of the intended sacrifice of Isaac. The promise of blessing to mankind through the seed of Abraham is thus distinctly associated with Isaac. Indeed, no such promise is in any one instance associated with Ishmael, the description of whom and of his exploits is as widely as possible at variance with such an idea,—'his hand will be against every man!' Nor only so, but as if to make assurance doubly sure, and to exclude all unlawful claimants, Jehovah Himself repeats the promise of 'blessing' in these identical terms to Isaac himself in particular,—and this, after Isaac had attained to manhood, and long after the separation of Ishmael from the family of the great patriarch. The passage, GEN. xxvi. 1—5, reads thus,—

'And there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, unto Gerar. And the

\* Priaulx, *Quæstiones Mosaicæ*, 412; Fuller, *Works*, 380.

† Fuller, *Works*, 385; Priaulx, *Quæstiones Mosaicæ*, 496-7.

Lord appeared unto him and said,—Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I will tell thee of. Sojourn in this land; and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed will I give all these countries. And I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and I will give unto thy seed all these countries. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.\*

This promise, so often repeated in the narrative, is invariably made in reference to that child who was to spring from Sarah, and never in any instance in reference to any other child who might at any time be born to Abraham.

Moreover, 'the promise' was made in reference to a child who was to be born at a certain specified time. Now, at the time the promise specifying an exact period was made, Ishmael was actually in existence,—a lad about thirteen years old.† But as if to indicate still further to which of the two branches of the patriarchal family 'THE COVENANT' had reference, we find that the Divine Being reiterated 'the promise,' in unmistakeable identity of terms, to even a *grandson* of the great patriarch's as well as to his son,—and to that one of his grandsons, be it observed, whose Divinely-given name is perpetuated through all the ages down to our own day as the characteristic name of that tribe from which Our Lord sprang,—the tribe of Israel. The passage occurs in GEN. xxviii. 13—15, where Jacob has his celebrated dream of the angels and the ladder; and where it is said that—

'The Lord stood above the ladder, and said,—I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And

\* Fuller, *Works*, 393.

† Cnf. p. 96.

behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places  
whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this  
land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which  
I have spoken to thee of.\*

God permitted the genealogical connexion of the race of Ishmael to become irrecoverably lost in an almost incredibly short space of time after Ishmael's decease, while that of the race of Isaac has never been lost; and the entire history of his race, down through the long ages of kings, and prophets, and witness-bearers, is among the clearest phenomena of human history. All this is taught even in Islâmic legend itself, and ought to have its lesson for the Muslim, shewing as it does how steadily God has kept His promise in mind, and guarded its fulfilment from confusion.

In connexion with the citations we have thus made, we are entitled to ask:—If the Muḥammadan admits that the Book of GENESIS, as it stands, is of Divine authority, (which in effect he does, if his continually quoting it in support of his own view amounts to anything at all,) what does he make of those statements in ch. xvii. 21 and xxi. 9—12, in which Jehovah Himself expressly excludes Ishmael in favour of the son of Sarah? The two passages read thus,—

‘But My COVENANT will I establish with Isaac,’ (as contrasted, it will be observed, with Ishmael,) ‘whom Sarah shall bear unto thee this set time next year.’——

‘And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, mocking; wherefore she said unto Abraham,—Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because he was his son. And God said unto Abraham,—Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman. In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice, for *in Isaac* shall thy seed be called!’†

That is to say, those who should in all the ages be recognized as the ‘Seed of Abraham’ would be those who would descend from

\* Fuller, *Works*, 398.

† Ibid. 378, 384.

him through Isaac. Not only is Isaac here expressly singled out by name, in distinction from Ishmael, as the Child of Promise, but the exclusion of the son of Hagar from the patriarchal family and inheritance is authorized even by Jehovah Himself,—‘In all that Sarah hath said unto thee *hearken unto her voice!*’ No measure could be more significant than that to which in the clearest terms God here gives His irrevocable sanction. More than twenty centuries later He shews that His mind is unchanged, for in GAL. iv. 30 we read,—

‘Nevertheless, *what saith the Scripture!*—Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman!’\*

Thus does God corroborate the measure urged by Sarah by giving to it many ages afterwards the sanction of His own imprimatur: He raises the language of Sarah to the lofty platform of inspiration,—a platform from which there is no appeal. The words of Paul (‘*what saith the Scripture!*’), in which he thus teaches that the language of Sarah on this occasion was uttered by Divine sanction and inspiration, are in entire accord with the language of Jehovah Himself in the Jewish Scriptures,—‘*Hearken unto her voice!*’ Jehovah thus teaches us that the language uttered by Sarah had a meaning infinitely more solemn and more far-reaching than she had any thought of,—that the exclusion from the patriarchal home was but symbolical of exclusion from the covenant about which He had been exercising the patriarch’s faith.

And thus were Ishmael and his mother finally and expressly excluded both from the family of Abraham, and also from any inheritance that might appertain to it. The very fact of such

\* The Revision of the New Testament lately completed at Westminster has not yet been accepted by the Christian public as final or unalterable. In citing, therefore, passages from that Book, we keep to the rendering of King James’s Translators, —noting differences made by the Westminster Revisers, only when their renderings affect the point under consideration. This is the more important on the score of uniformity in our citations from the Bible, as the Revision of the Old Testament by that learned assembly has not yet been published.



exclusion of Ishmael, and of the undisputed retention of Isaac, might well suggest to the mind of the Muslim that, at any rate in the estimation of the father, there was now no sort of doubt as to which of these sons was the Child of Promise. To have thus irrevocably sent away the child of THE COVENANT to take his own chance at so early a period of his life in a distant and unknown country, and among an alien, hostile, and idolatrous people,\* is not the act of a man to whom a son and heir has been vouchsafed in his old age as a special mark of the Almighty's favour, and who is cognizant of having himself received directly from Him promises of unspeakable blessing concerning the future of that very child,—a future which will, he knows, be such as will forever connect himself with the history of the entire human race and with its salvation. The son who was retained in the patriarchal household would be the heir. This was, as we see, the real motive for the exclusion of Ishmael; and it is a fact to which none could have been more fully alive than the patriarch himself. The retention of Isaac derived its significance from the fact that it involved heirship and succession,—secular and ecclesiastical.

All this derives whatever may be needed by way of confirmation, from the inspired records of the Jews in GEN. xxv. 5; 6, where the writer, after enumerating the offspring of Abraham by Keturah, Sarah's successor, adds,—

'And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had, he gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he himself yet lived, eastward,† unto the east country',—*viz.* to the northern part of Arabia.‡

\* Muḥammadans, as the reader will remember, contend that Ishmael was, with his mother, banished to the territory of Makka,—the abode (according to them) of the idolatrous Jurhumites:—Cnf. p. 60 seqq.

† 'Eastward';—Or rather, 'south-east.' Of these people came eventually the father-in-law of Moses. As to the geographical allusion here, consult p. 138.

‡ Lowth, *Lectures on Hebrew Poetry*, Appendix, 449; Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 412; Priaulx, *Questions Mosaïques*, 522.

That is to say, all the base-born\* children of the patriarch Ishmael included, were removed from the patriarchal household, and from inheritance,—Isaac alone remaining in the house, the sole heir of the patrimony. Through him, and through no other, descended the patriarchs, potentates, and prophets of the royal House in a direct line to Him who was the Antitype of the types, the Burden of promise and prediction, the Theme of angelic song,—through whom all the nations are being blessed.

No language, it seems to us, could have been clearer than the language of the promises we have quoted in connexion with this COVENANT. There is so much of insight and justice in the views expressed upon the whole case by Kalisch, that we may here embody some portions from his epitome of the facts. Among many eastern peoples it is and has from time immemorial been customary, that in the event of a matrimonial alliance remaining for some time without progeny, the husband with the consent of his wife, should take another person for the mere purpose of securing heirs to perpetuate his name and family. The person so taken does not share the husband's affection with the legal wife,—to whom she is in fact regarded as subordinate, to whom even her children are supposed to belong, and 'upon whose knees she bears'—GEN. xxx. 3. In the present instance it is to be noted that the proposal to seek posterity in accordance with this custom, proceeded not from Abraham, but from Sarah herself. The patriarch, although evidently desiring offspring not less intensely than Sarah (GEN. xv. 2, 3), appears never to have thought of wronging the wife of his youth and covenant. In his heart monogamy was a sacred principle,—to which his son Isaac also adhered, and which even Jacob acknowledged, although the fraud of Laban induced him to abandon it.

The object of Sarah in bringing Hagar to Abraham is distinctly expressed,—'Peradventure I may obtain children by her.'

\* The expression is not of necessity depreciatory: we use it merely for the purpose of distinction.

Humanly speaking there appeared to be reason on her side, no less than oriental custom. It demanded nothing less than a reversal of the laws of nature that an aged couple, themselves conscious of their decrepitude, should be blessed with offspring. Yet Abraham did not doubt that the powers of nature obey the Creator of heaven and earth. But if even the faith of Abraham required a sign to assure him of the possession of Canaan (GEN. xv. 8—18), it cannot be surprising that the confidence of his partner should be deficient and wavering. She could not rise to the conception of a miraculous fulfilment of the promise, and she tried to effect the fulfilment in a natural manner. This hasty interference with the Divine plan was the more excusable from the circumstance that Sarah had nowhere been designated as the mother of the future people. It was even an act of self-denial to resign all claims to that glory and leave it to one in every way subordinate to her. She chose for that end an expedient very general in the East under similar circumstances, and resorted to even by nations among whom monogamy is the rule and the law.

When Sarah disclosed her proposal to Abraham it may not improbably have occurred to his mind that the promise was only made to *him*, and not to Sarah. It may also have occurred to him that under the circumstances, the way indicated by Sarah was the only reasonable way for obtaining a descendant through whom the great assurances of God might be fulfilled. At any rate, no exception has ever been taken, even by inspired Hebrews, to the conduct of Abraham in this instance; so that there is good reason for supposing that his conduct was regarded by them as neither irregular, unlawful, nor sinful. Indeed, his conduct is vindicated by so high an authority as the prophet Malachi, who emphatically blamed those who pretended that they were permitted, after the example of Abraham, to take another besides their legal wife: in them it would be treachery, while in Abraham it was an act of faith,—‘that he might seek a godly seed’—MAL. ii. 15.\*

\* Cf. Kalisch on GENESIS, xvi. 4—6.

The consequences which followed upon Abraham's compliance with Sarah's proposal, led to the upsetting of the peace and order that had hitherto reigned in the patriarchal home. The women both of them failed to rise to the purity of Abraham's exalted notions in connexion with the case. They saw in the expected child an heir, and nothing more; they regarded each other with the invidious eyes of rivals; and that which was commenced as an act of faith ended in bitter envy and strife. When Sarah made her heartless suggestion as to the punishment of Hagar,—ch. xvi. 6,—her husband appears to have shewn the blameable weakness of unopposing compliance,—unmindful of the child whom Hagar was about to bear him. At that time, however, he had scarcely hoped that this child was destined for any great purpose, and he merely regarded it as the possible representative and preserver of his name. But when the child was *born*, and proved to be a son, the paternal tenderness began to attach to his future greater significance. For a while he even considered him as the long-promised son, through whom all spiritual blessings were to be fulfilled; and when Jehovah repeatedly gave the prophetic assurances of the vastness of the future dominions of the Abrahamic race, the patriarch felt his heart bound by mighty ties to the firstling of his strength and hope—GEN. xvii. 18; xvi. 12 and xvii. 20. When, therefore, Sarah demanded Ishmael's expulsion, the father was roused to deep indignation,—his affections warmed for his only son, and he refused this time to yield to his wife's impetuosity.

Passing over a number of years, between the birth of Ishmael and the infancy of Isaac, we come at length upon the place where the family discord becomes incurable and the breach hopeless. The assiduous care lavished on Isaac, and the fondness and pride with which he was reared, excited in Hagar and her son feelings of jealousy and bitterness. The latter had passed his sixteenth year, when the wild, ungovernable, and pugnacious character ascribed to his descendants, began to shew itself, and

to appear in language of provoking insolence. Offended at the comparative indifference with which he was treated, he indulged in mockery,—especially, perhaps, at the expense of Isaac, whose very name furnished him with satirical sneers. Sarah was unable either to correct or control his conduct, or even to endure it. Her heart, overflowing with gratification and felicity, was stained with vanity and pride, and she relapsed into her former loveless coldness. Seeing in Ishmael nothing but the contemptible son of an Egyptian bondmaid, forgetting that he was that offspring of her husband which she had herself sought, and heedless of the blessings which God had pronounced upon him, she demanded his expulsion together with that of his detested mother.

On a previous occasion the great patriarch had weakly complied, but on this occasion he refused to yield, till God Himself interposed. The scheme which God pursued with Abraham demanded the subordination of the flesh to the spirit. The father was to be merged in the prophet. He no longer belonged to himself, but to God and to mankind. His heart might bleed, but his will must obey. It was necessary that the fate of Ishmael and the fate of Isaac should from the beginning be most distinctly separated. The elder branch was to acquire fame and wealth; the younger was to glory in piety and truth. Avocations so radically different could scarcely be pursued within the same land: they indicate an essential and absolute divergence of character; and though they may not necessarily engender enmity, they cannot secure sympathy. The descendants of Ishmael,—those roaming, adventurous, restless tribes,—could not be satisfied with the narrow limits of Canaan; nor, on the other hand, could the progeny of Isaac,—the people of priests and prophets,—wield the spear in the unfriendly Desert against the straying wanderer. Therefore did God command Abraham to submit without reluctance to Sarah's demand, and to centre his hope and his care henceforward upon the younger son alone, —born to propagate both his name and his faith.

Thus was the question of the priority of the two sons taken in hand by God Himself. We have here an additional proof of the fact that in the Divine procedure, priority of birth does not establish a higher claim. Thus, Cain was less acceptable to Him than Abel, and Esau was subordinate to Jacob.\* And this important truth is embodied with great power in the case of Ishmael, though it is apt to be overlooked by a nation with an agrarian constitution, like that of Mosaism. Mere primogeniture was not allowed to over-ride the policy of the patriarch, or to lead him to ignore the primary claim of the child of his legal wife. Not physical but spiritual birthright constitutes the greater blessing. Primogeniture may secure greater worldly possession, but it has never commanded that true felicity which is accessible to every man according to his nature and bent.† Even Muḥammadans will admit that Ishmael was but the son of a slave-girl who stood in no relation of consanguinity to the household. Though some of them, indeed, in the exigency of the situation (for pride of mere blood is an infirmity of their race) deny the fact, and assert that he was the son of a Princess.‡ And they must also own that Isaac was the son of the lawful wife to whom *by name* 'the promise' was made. And it should be borne in mind that it was not the custom of the Jews to include in promises and heirships their base-born children to the exclusion of those born in lawful wedlock. No *wrong* was done to Ishmael by thus excluding him. Whatever claim he might have been supposed to have had prior to the birth of Isaac, he clearly could no longer have been regarded as the heir, now that a son had been born to the legal wife. Now that the reality had come, there was no further need for the fiction or compromise. In the case of the Jews the chances of the success of Muḥammad's

\* With GEN. iv. 4, 5 compare 1 JNO. iv. 12; and with GEN. xxvii. 37 compare MAL. i. 2, 3, ROM. ix. 13, and references.

† The reader will find much profitable reading, in reference to all the passages cited by us, in the exquisite *Commentary* of Dr. Kalisch; from which we have quoted.

‡ Mahomet Rabadan, in Morgan's *Mahometism Explained*, i. 114 seqq.

pretensions were immeasurably less than with any others, for they never would make the degrading admission that a descendant of the bondwoman was the Divinely-commissioned leader and teacher of the posterity of the free.\* Realizing, as Muḥammadans do, the force of this, many of them contend that Hagar was not a bondwoman or a concubine of Abraham's at all, but his lawfully-married wife, and, as just mentioned, a person of royal descent. And they maintain that Ishmael was consequently the superior of Isaac in point of nobility no less than in point of seniority.†

If now we turn to the *import* of 'the COVENANT' we shall see still further how unsound the Muslim dogma regarding Ishmael is.

Through the promised Seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed. God did not speak in the Book of GENESIS of His promise concerning Ishmael as being a *covenant*; though Paul, indeed, speaks of something as being 'two covenants.' It has been contended by Forster and others that the 'two covenants' referred to are the two sets of promises made by Jehovah in reference to the two sons, and that these two sets of promises contain no spiritual allusion,—that, in fact, they contain allusion to temporal and secular blessing merely. We confess our inability to accede to this view.‡ The difficulty ought to be removed by the rendering given in the Westminster Revision of the text 'αὗται γάρ εἰσι δύο διαθήκαι.' By the omission of αἱ before δύο,§

\* Taylor, *History of Mohammedanism*, 62.

† The reader will find many of the Muslim legends regarding the case given by Mahomet Rabadan in Morgan, *Mahometism Explained*, i. 144—75.

‡ While saying this, we ought, in justice to this most laborious writer, to say that notwithstanding the unsoundness of some of Forster's own peculiar theories regarding the identification of persons and places in connexion with Arabian history, his works form a storehouse of learned information of which no student of Islāmic matters can afford to be ignorant.

§ As to the *authority* for the omission of the article here, the reader may consult Alford, *Greek Testament*, in loc. (GAL. iv. 24).

and the insertion in Italics of the word 'women,' that Revision renders the passage,—'For these *women* are two covenants,'—a rendering which, we submit, places out of court the interpretation upon which the opinion of Forster rests. This, however, does not invalidate the statement that there are two sets of promises in the case. The promises that have reference to Ishmael are indeed destitute of any allusion to anything better than secular things; but even apart from all that is said in the New Testament regarding the subject, a comparison of the two sets of promises appears to us to favour distinctly the interpretation placed upon them by the Jews. The insertion of that allusion to the predatory and combative character which was to distinguish Ishmael and his descendants, draws the line very sharply. It seems to us that it is impossible to over-estimate the significance of the insertion of so suggestive an allusion in the one case and the omission of anything like it in the other. Any one who will trace the history of the two branches of the patriarch's family will, we believe, be led to conclude that the history admits of this interpretation and of no other.

The language in a passage recently cited from GENESIS, 'But My COVENANT will I establish with Isaac,' clearly raises a broad line of demarcation between the promises made concerning the one child and those concerning the other. At first sight it appears to imply that no covenant at all was made in the case of Ishmael. And in any case it means that the promise made in reference to Isaac was of such infinitely greater moment, that it was thus singled out for notice as if it were the only covenant made in connexion with the both cases. God here speaks of His covenant-making in the future tense. So far from Ishmael having been a sharer in a covenant in the strict and proper sense in which Isaac was, it is here evident that the Almighty did not regard Himself as having yet entered into a covenant even with Isaac. And as a matter of fact the covenant was not 'established with Isaac' till many years afterwards, when he was grown to



manhood. Moreover, the very form of covenant-making which God had Himself taught to Abraham\* was observed in connexion with Isaac, and Isaac only,—and that at God's own direction—namely, the offering up of a life in sacrifice. The sacrificed animals were divided in the midst from the head downwards, and a smoking furnace and a burning lamp (fire is frequently a symbol of the Deity) were then passed between the pieces. Thus does Jehovah bind Himself by an oath-taking of the most solemn kind to the fulfilment of His covenant. What that covenant was, whether in relation to its temporal aspects or in relation to its spiritual ones, must have been understood by Abraham, for Our Lord testifies to the fact,—‘Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; he saw it, and was glad!’† The fact of his being possessed of this joy-inspiring hope was, beyond a doubt, made known by him to his family; and he doubtless explained to them, as far as he was able to do so, the great object to which it was directed. When the promise was solemnly renewed to Isaac and to Jacob, on the occasions above mentioned, its meaning and object must accordingly have been at once apprehended and distinctly understood by them. It follows that wherever the blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is alluded to, or the covenant which God made with them and their posterity is recognized as the glory and hope of Israel, this essential part of it,—the promise of the Messiah, and the blessing to be communicated through Him to all the nations of the earth,—must have been equally and perpetually recognized as the great object of the Jewish faith,—the all-absorbing consideration to which every part of the Jewish scheme was subordinate. So that the original foundation and primary characteristic of that scheme, so far from being partial and exclusive, avowedly extended to all families of the earth, and centred in that Messiah who is the grand Object

\* GEN. xv. 9, 10 (with which compare JER. xxxiv. 18, 19); Prieaulx, *Quæstiones Mosæicæ*, 337.

† JOHN viii. 56.

of all the Dispensations from the commencement of revelation to its close.\* The contrast between the two sets of promises is indeed very great. The entire absence of all allusion to spiritual blessings on the posterity of Ishmael is a remarkable feature. Their share in the promises was to be a temporal one only,—a circumstance which is manifested and confirmed by the institution among them of the rite of circumcision. What evidence can the Muslim produce to shew that the promise relating to Ishmael was of a spiritual nature? or wherein do the promises relating to his posterity transcend those which relate to the posterity of Isaac? If the element of spirituality were as clear in the promise relating to Ishmael as it is in that which relates to Isaac, the Muḥammadan would see no spiritual application of the promise relating to Isaac. So true is this, that Muḥammadans accuse the Jews of having falsely attributed to Isaac the most remarkable events connected with the history of Ishmael.†

The Muslim should exercise himself to explain in what way mankind has been 'blessed' by means of Ishmael or his descendants. He believes Muḥammad to have been the person to whom the covenant points;—will he not tell us in what ways Muḥammad has ever proved a 'blessing' to those races of the human family which have had the misfortune of being made subject to his system?‡ Those who are of opinion that the advocates of

\* Graves, *Lectures on the last four Books of the Pentateuch*, 372 (edn. Lond. 1846).

† Taylor, *History of Mohammedanism*, 24.

‡ The dispassionate reader will hardly need that we should here explain that we allude not to the instances in which mere fetic̄-worshippers have been subdued to the acceptance of Islām. To this consideration we shall revert in due course. In the meantime we may note that its acceptance among the Negroes of inner Africa, of which so much has been boasted, cannot be proved to have resulted from the quiet work of mere appeal to their moral nature. Of the methods by which such result has been brought about, the less said the better for the smug self-complacency of the Muslim apologist. Happily for him, the history of central Africa is at a safe distance from microscopic criticism. But the boasted progress of Islām there, mentioned by Mungo Park, is considered by so cautious and impartial

Christianity are rather hard upon the system introduced by Muḥammad, sometimes seek to palliate or condone the evils inherent in that system by urging that Islām has performed a noble mission.\* We do not deny that some Muslims may, like other men, have done good service in the world; but the point which these apologists have to elucidate is that the good thus achieved was attributable to the accident of their religious prepossessions. As well might one contend that the mere circumstance of the discovery of the deaf and dumb Alphabet by a Romish priest proves that the Papacy is the friend of scientific advancement, and that the dogmas of Roman Catholicism are of Divine origin. Similarly, the fact pointed out by Leibnitz, that Servetus 'understood the circulation of the blood' would not of itself be sufficient to give the stamp of orthodoxy to his views either in the judgment of the Trinitarian Papist, or of the anti-Trinitarian Muslim, or of the evangelical believer.† An isolated case here and there is very far from meeting the requirements of the argument: the question is whether Muḥammadanism, taken as a whole,

an authority as Forster (*Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 323) to 'demonstrate merely its peculiar adaptation to the human animal in a brutified state of existence.' It certainly has never been accepted, unless at the point of the sword, by any race or tribe excepting fetich-worshippers. The Qur'ān, in fact, teaches expressly that abstention from bloodshed is to The Faithful an evil:—'War is ordained for you, even though it be irksome unto you. Perchance ye dislike that which is good for you (*i. e.* war), and love that which is evil for you (*i. e.* peace). But God knoweth, and ye know not!' 'The triumph of Muḥammadanism in Arabia,' says Tiele (*The Universal Religions*, 103), 'was due to political considerations, and to the absence of anything better to occupy the field. The way for its diffusion beyond was paved by arms, and the pecuniary and civil privileges conferred on Believers among vanquished peoples secured for it a multitude of adherents.' He adds,—'True and zealous followers it found only among nations of *imperfect development*,—such as the superficial Christians of Egypt, North Africa, and Spain, among the Berbers, Negroes, Malays, and Turks. In Persia and India it only conquered by force.' All history proves the mournful fact that Islām languishes when its nails are drawn.

\* Among many other works, see Power's *Empire of the Musulmans in Spain*, passim; Bosworth Smith's *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, passim; and portions of the INTRODUCTION to Lane's *Selections from the Kur'ān*, written by his grand-nephew, Mr. Stanley Lane Poole, and published by Trübner, 1879.

† Cnf. The Four Treatises, *Reflections on Mahometanism*, 252.

has tended to raise the nations to a higher platform of intelligence and morality. That it may have done this in the case of certain races of fetich-worshippers is not to the point, as long as the Muslim asserts that it has been established by the Almighty to supersede Christianity.\* The Muslim is bound to shew in what respects it is calculated to be a blessing to *Christians* in the event of their relinquishing their religion in favour of it. The sanguinary ravages of hordes of more than half-savage Arabians among the nations round about the Mediterranean,—ravages carried on in direct obedience to the command of religion,—will surely not be cited by any sane man as evidence that Muḥammad was designed by our good Father to supersede Jesus! It is no sign of craven cowardice when one gives a wide berth to a rabid dog. The progress of the Christian religion has not been the result of bloodshed carried on under the command of the Lord and Saviour of men. But not only are bloody conquests quoted in order to prove that the religion of Muḥammad came from the Father of men, but a book of poetry or of astronomy that has now and then been written by an adherent of that Faith has also been cited for the same purpose! Why do not those apologists of Islām quote the burning of the Alexandrian library, and the attempt to demolish the Great Pyramid as evidences of the same thing?† On what principles of reasoning does the construction of a canal from Alexandria to Cairo prove the celestial origin of a man's religious opinions?‡ Since when has it been accepted

\* Among many other works which teem with evidence as to the condition of those races which are under Islāmic rule, see Palgrave's *Travels in Central and Eastern Arabia*, passim; Niebuhr's *Travels in Arabia*; Osborn's *Islām under the Arabs*; and the works of Burckhardt and Burton. The writings of all travellers and eye-witnesses, in fact, are in the same key: there never was, on any great question, a more overwhelming consensus of opinion. The only doubters, are those who never saw.

† Cnf. Smyth, *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid*.

‡ Rehatsek, *Reciprocal influence of European and Muhammadan Civilisation* (Prize Essay; 1877), p. 3; Syed Ameer Ali, *Life of Mohammad*, 330; Palgrave, *Travels in Arabia*, ii. 192; Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 299. The reader who is in

by the sense of civilized men that mere feats of intellect or of scientific discovery are to be taken as a test of the divine quality of one's religious persuasion? The human family, even on this side of the grave, stands in need of other and more spiritual 'blessings' than these.\*

This question of the influence of Islām on the world's advancement is one that has much exercised the thoughts of very different men, yet the conclusions at which they have arrived have been substantially the same. To shew that we are not alone in holding the views we have put forward, we may here present to the reader the opinions of several men of established reputation who have written on this feature of the subject. These opinions are of the greater value in that they have been arrived at by men of different schools of thought in the matter of religion. The fact, moreover, of the authors being all of them men who have written in recent years, will shew that old-fashioned though our ideas on the subject may be, they are, upon the whole and in the long-run, in perfect harmony with those of modern writers, many of whom must be regarded as free from the bias under which men are supposed to write who are by their profession committed to the public advocacy of the Christian faith.

The reader will, no doubt, bear in mind that with the personal character of Muḥammad we have here no concern. What, moreover, may have been the causes of the success of his system, and what the secret of its continuance, are points which do not fall within the range of the present treatise.† We are only concerned here to ascertain whether Muḥammadanism has been,

interested in the subject of the various attempts that have been made to unite the Seas at the Isthmus of Suez may consult Weil, *Geschichte des Chalifen*, i. 120—22 (edn. Mannheim, 1846—1851); Bähr, *Herodotus*, ii. 158; the *Revue des deux Mondes*, xxvii. 215; Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, 245 (edn. Lond. 1882).

\* Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 175; *The Quarterly Review* for Jan. 1877, pp. 236-7.

† All these points, and every other essential point of difference between Christianity and Islām, will be dealt with in due course in the Missionary's *VADE-MECUM* Series, of which the present work is the first instalment.

or is ever likely to become, such a blessing to 'all the families of the earth,' as to entitle it to be recognized as the 'blessing' promised in the words of the original Covenant.

There is, perhaps, no subject connected with Muḥammadanism on which non-Muslim writers have differed so strongly as on this of the utility of that system in the economy of the world. It is obvious that the soundness of one's conclusions on such a matter must depend in great measure upon the principles on which the enquiry is pursued.\* Claiming, as Muḥammadanism does, to supersede and to excel both Judaism and Christianity, the question is at once brought within the domain of religion, whether one will or no; and the discussion cannot be carried on to any purpose, unless comparisons, more or less to the disadvantage of one side or the other, be made.

There are three classes of writers on Islām who are bound to miss their way,—either because they start on false premisses, or because they are in pursuit of the wrong thing. The first of these classes that we will mention are those who believe that it does not matter what religion a man embraces, provided only that he is sincerely attached to some religion. Muslim and Jew, Christian and Pagan, the worshipper of the unseen God and the believer in the divinity of a fetish,—all stand an equal chance of coming right in the end; for, all are equally ignorant and equally deluded, inasmuch as there is no such thing as the objective in religion. This is not the opinion of the Muḥammadan. Of all men in the world, he is the last who could consent to believe such a dogma as that. Let any one try, who doubts. The Muḥammadan would form no alliance with a person holding such a dogma; but would regard him either as a madman, or an impostor, or a fool, or (to use his own expression) an 'Infidel.' Such a dogma means simple indifference to the real issues of the question; and a foregone conclusion either that all religions are equally false,—especially Christianity; or that all religions are equally true,

\* Stobart, *Islām and its Founder*, 232.

—especially Muḥammadanism: in other words, that the religion of the New Testament has been proved over and over again to be unworthy of credence; that it is ignored by all advanced thinkers and persons of self-possession; and that but for various classes of persons who have a pecuniary interest in its continuance, it would long since have been defunct, like many other effete and old-world dogmas of the unfortunate wights who had to live in the Dark Ages. They quote with ardent approval the sayings of Muḥammad regarding 'Hell' and 'the Devil,' to establish their opinion that he was 'a true prophet' and that the Qur'ān is a Heaven-inspired book; yet when these same words of Holy Scripture are used by a Christian missionary, they regard it as entitling them to call him 'a fanatic.' When the Muḥammadan uses the ordinary nomenclature of inspired teaching, he is 'a sincere man;' when a Christian uses the same words, he is 'a wrong-headed man' and 'a misguided enthusiast.' Persons of this class have learned all that they are ever likely to learn, and are therefore unfit to be teachers of men. Like him who 'betrayed the Son of man with a kiss,' they are at home with neither side, and have forfeited the confidence of both. To this class we are tempted to assign writers of the school of the Rev. Bosworth Smith, who, we would fain hope, has come to see the unsoundness of many of the opinions put forward in his work on the subject of *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*.\*

\* For some very just remarks on the mistakes of this apparently well-meaning writer, regarding the whole subject of MUHAMMADANISM, the reader is referred to an Article in the *Quarterly Review* for Jan. 1877, especially from p. 233 onwards. The true cure for all men who find themselves the victims of notions so out of harmony with the Sacred Scriptures as those aired by this writer, is to become themselves evangelists among Muḥammadans. If they complain that missionaries of the type of Henry Martyn and Mr. Leupolt (see p. 247 of Mr. Smith's work) have already spoiled the field, they might try new ground,—say, Arabia, which has from the first been left sufficiently to itself (as far, at least, as modern missionary organizations are concerned) to constitute it a very fair criterion of the best fruits of Islām when not 'corrupted' by Christianity.

The truth is, writings of the 'broad' sort are all of them vitiated by one mistake,—they keep out of view the defects of Muḥammadanism, and then shew how

The second class of writers are those whose ideas of 'blessing' are narrowed down to the mere blessing of education, and in whose judgment scientific advance and intellectual culture appear to constitute 'the be-all and the end-all' of human attainment. Now, the man who does not treat Muḥammadanism as a religious question, beats the air. Islām does not profess to be a civilizing agency, but an agency for the salvation of men's souls. Some writers of this class have enumerated the achievements of Muḥammadans in the realm of secular knowledge, and have enthusiastically attributed these achievements to the accident of the men's religion. Their admiration for a literary

near it comes to Christianity! In the opinion of men like Mr. Bosworth Smith, there is but a step between the two systems; and Muḥammadans are debarred from taking that step by one simple cause,—the 'ignorance' and 'bigotry' of missionaries! If the representations of 'broad' writers were sound, the blame for Musalmāns not becoming Christians would lie not at the door of the 'bigoted and ignorant missionaries' (from whom, we are sorry to note, Mr. Smith has the good taste to single out two eminent missionaries of his own Church—Henry Martyn and Mr. Leupolt—for special animadversion), but at the door of the 'broad' writers themselves. If Mr. Smith and men like him are anything more than the veriest triflers, it is, by their own showing, they, and not the 'bigoted and ignorant missionaries,' who are solely to blame that Muḥammadans are not converts to the Christian faith; for they hold possession of a grand secret which they assure mankind is the only cure, and a sure one, and yet they never will stir from their arm-chairs, and go and try their hands at it. But, in truth, Muḥammadans are debarred from becoming Christians by just those very considerations which the 'broad-minded' men never will properly consider;—not the things which they and Christians hold in common, but those in which they differ from us. 'You say that Christ is good? We agree: but then, Muḥammad is better!' Let men of the 'broad' school shew by some practical experiments how to make Christians of men who are possessed of such a belief as this. The truth is, that men who undertake to lecture missionaries on the proper way to convert Muḥammadans are men who never touched the stupendous task with one of their fingers, and have yet to learn what, in fact, the difficulties themselves really are. They sometimes cite, with triumph and thankfulness, the name of some missionary who agrees with their views; but they forget to ascertain before doing so, whether he has achieved any distinction as a conversionist of Muḥammadans. Men who have no salvation to preach and no Christ to offer, cannot be expected to approve of the methods of Christian evangelists.—On this subject of the special and peculiar difficulties in the way of evangelization among Muḥammadans, the reader will find much sound writing in the *British Quarterly Review* for Jan. 1872, p. 132.



Muslim here and there, has led to their pronouncing a judgment upon the whole from a few isolated cases, and to their apparently utter obliviousness of anything that has been achieved in the same domain by adherents of the Christian faith. To this class we are compelled to assign writers of the school of Mr. Lake. In the judgment of this author, the world needs to be put right, even at this late hour, in reference to the opinions it arrived at long ago regarding the subject of Muḥammadanism. He tells us that he has 'studied the subject very carefully,' and writes 'with the view of assisting those who have but little leisure to investigate such subjects minutely.'\* Yet notwithstanding the careful and minute study which resulted in his book being written, the information he imparts would sadly mislead any one who should trust his judgment to his guidance. As an instance, we may mention his assertion that there were 365 idols in the Ka'ba when Muḥammad destroyed the images of the Temple.† He should have given his authority for so unprecedented a statement; for, among all writers, ancient or modern, whom we have consulted, he is the only writer who makes it. He appears to have concluded that the number of those idols had all along been stated under the supposition that the year contained but 360 days:‡ and as it is stated by the Arabian historians that there was in the Ka'ba an idol for every day in the year,§ he puts the figure right! The truth is, that the year of three hundred and sixty days was based on the old-world principle that in the beginning God designed that the year should be divided into twelve equal parts; in other words, that each lunation was performed in thirty days. This maxim found an adherent, as lately as the sixth century before Christ, in so celebrated a philosopher as Thales.

\* Lake, *Islam, its Origin, Genius, and Mission*, Pref. v (edn. Lond. 1878).

† Ibid. 26.

‡ Pocock, *Specimen*, 100; Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 8.

§ Sale, *Pref. Disc.* 14; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 908, 923.

Its unsoundness was detected by Solon, and rectified by him.\* It is the most ancient and unintelligent of all the methods of reckoning time.† As it was no part of the business of inspired men to reform the Calendar, this unworkable principle was the principle on which the prophets foretold coming events.‡ If, therefore, this is a specimen of the way in which this writer manipulates historical details in respect of matters not so generally known as that of the Calendar of the Arabians, it clearly is incumbent on the reader to receive his statements with circumspection.§ It was long ago pointed out by Sir William Muir that the statement that there were in the Ka'ba three hundred and sixty idols,—an idol for each day in the year,—is but a popular tradition, not founded upon any careful authority.|| In fact, Major Osborn, ignores this traditional number altogether, and says merely that besides the three celebrated goddesses Al-Lât, Al-'Uzza, and Al-Manât, and 'the great idol' Hubal,¶ there were 'more than two hundred images'

\* Cnf. Plutarch's *Lives*, Grecian Section, p. 72 (Langhorne's Translation, edn. Lond. 1876). The reader will find this point followed up in our work on *The Muslim Calendar*, which we hope will shortly appear.

† Cnf. Jennings, *Jewish Antiquities*, 412-13.

‡ Cnf. DAN. vii. 25 (on the subject of the 1260 days). The reader who cares to follow up the point may with profit consult the great work of Hales; also the Articles, CHRONOLOGY, MONTH, YEAR in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and the Article CALENDAR in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th edn.).

§ This well-meaning writer claims to have performed the curious feat of having read the Qur'ân through,—a feat which Carlyle believed impossible excepting to a Believer. The reader of his book will not fail to feel at every step that this unwonted achievement has not added anything to the weight or conclusiveness of the author's reasoning. Boys sometimes seek to beguile the weary hours of sermon in Church by reading the Bible through; but we never heard of their grounding on this rare exercise a claim to understanding the Book better than those who use it still more wisely. But see Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 382. Even Lane confesses to the 'extreme tiresomeness' of the reading of the Qur'ân to him. It cannot be said that in his case this feeling of boredom was the result of ignorance of Arabic, or want of taste and culture in Arabic lore, or of disaffection towards the followers of Muḥammad.

|| Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, ii. 41.

¶ Cnf. pp. 16—26.

at the Ka'ba.\* The probable explanation is that the number of idols had nothing whatever to do with the number of days in the year (an opinion which, in point of fact, occasions serious difficulty), but merely shews how numerous the tribes were who were confederated at the Ka'ba for the purposes of religion, commerce, and politics.† But this error of Mr. Lake's is nothing when compared with the gross blunder he makes regarding the BLACK STONE. Concerning this interesting object he writes,—‘There were, further, a black stone, reported to be the sepulchre of Ishmael; and another that fell from heaven in the time of Adam, which was originally white, but had been blackened by the kisses of devotees.’‡ Will not this author give us a little more information concerning that *other* stone? Is this a part of the outcome of that minute and careful study by which he seeks to establish his claim to ‘assist’ his readers to a right understanding of a subject which is not sufficiently known? Mr. Lake is a Fellow of one of the learned Societies of the world's metropolis,—the Meteorological Society: we feel unable to believe that the knowledge of this author represents the state of information embodied in that learned Society regarding what is believed by many specialists to be the most remarkable of all the meteors in the world.§ Undoubtedly Mr. Lake has laboured hard about his book, but it is a work which at this time of day no man would think deserving of refutation. To undertake such a task could not but degrade the intelligence and the spirit of the man who should attempt it. He follows the guidance of Gibbon with implicit reliance; though no man whose judgment is not warped by the idolatry of great names, would now-a-days accept without further investigation, the ‘facts’ of the great historian,|| and assuredly not his reasoning.

\* Osborn, *Islām under the Arabs*, 12.

† This view seems to be borne out by Dr. Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 8.

‡ Lake, *Islām*, 26.

§ On this subject the reader will be able to satisfy himself by a perusal of our work on *The Black Stone* which will, we hope, appear shortly.

|| The reader who would satisfy himself of the fallacy of accepting Gibbon's

When a man who engages to set the world right in respect of its information, is found to be so far at sea in reference to matters which everybody knows, it is too much for him to expect that people should yield their judgments to his manipulation to be guided to whatever conclusions he may form upon inexact information.

Thirdly, a man who is not assured of the divine origin of Muḥammadanism, or of Judaism, or of Christianity, is clearly not entitled to be considered a witness on either side,—not because his testimony is not that of an impartial witness; for, impartiality is not the only necessary to the formation of a right judgment on such a matter as this: but because, being a disbeliever in all revealed religion whatsoever, and in the necessity for 'walking by faith, and not by sight,' he cannot put himself in the position of a genuine advocate of either side, and is essentially as strongly opposed to the dogma of the inspiration of the Qur'an as to the dogma of the inspiration of the Bible. The person who does not believe in Al-Qiyāmat ('the Day of the Resurrection to eternal Judgment') or in Ar-Rûḥ ('the deathless and responsible spirit in man') would be disowned by every true and orthodox Muḥammadan as destitute of the essential title to lay his hands on the subject. It is quite true that Muḥammadans of the school of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, finding themselves utterly and hopelessly beaten by Christian writers, readily seize on odds and ends of sentences which they find in the pages of writers of the school of Gibbon; but such Muḥammadans are not in sympathy with Gibbon's religious views, any more than Gibbon is in sympathy with theirs. The writings of the great historian contain more of the language of ridicule and contempt of Islām than any Muḥammadan would care to cite; and they are quoted by the school we have mentioned under the impression, apparently, that every Englishman is ipso facto a believer in the Lord Jesus.

'facts' may do so by reading Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 462; also 383—416, and many other places in Forster's magnificent achievement.

Christ, and that in Gibbon we have a singular instance of a Christian writer of exemplary impartiality! No one would be more surprised or disgusted than Gibbon to learn that he had been taken for 'a Christian.' All this proves that men who have no sympathy with the great subject of religion, have no function to discharge in the stupendous question which fills the heart of the genuine Muslim. Men who do not believe in revealed religion at all, or in the necessity of revelation for right guidance in the matter of religion, are therefore by the very conditions of the argument, incapable of giving an opinion that could be held by the advocates of either side as being of any real and permanent value. Useful workers in the field of religious archæology they may be, as Gibbon assuredly was; but the only function they can discharge in respect of the questions that sever Muslim from Christian and Jew, is the valuable one of unearthing materials, and stating the results of their researches in calm, judicial language. The bearings of such materials upon the great subject of religious evidence can only be determined by men to whom religion is a reality.

Writers who belong to these three classes invariably quarrel among themselves, for they are not agreed as to the principles on which the inquiry should be conducted; and they invariably end in arriving at conclusions the unsoundness of which is proved by the fact that while they roam about at their own sweet will in realms where all are agreed, they leave all the real difficulties of the question unsolved, and in some instances even untouched.

Now, writers who answer these several descriptions, sometimes resort to the trite argument of Muḥammadan special pleaders,—that the success of the Saracens in their conflicts with peoples both barbarous and civilized, is an evidence of the superiority of their religion! We are surely fallen on strange times. The cultured men of the most advanced schools of modern thinking are content with the argument that the hacking and hewing of men in battle is a sign of the excellence of one's religious

creed! No argument is more frequently put before us by modern writers than this, as evidence why Christian people should be 'charitable' in the estimate they form regarding the origin of Islâm and the spirit that swayed its founder. But what is more likely than that a people given largely to the peaceful pursuits of civilized life,—such as agriculture, literature, and trade,—should be subjugated by the first invader, however savage? What more likely than that Jews, who were not possessed of political power, or Christians, who were forbidden, as such, to slay their fellow-men, should fall an easy prey to a race of savages, such as the wild Sons of the Arabian Deserts were,—savages to whom fighting and plunder were the only means of acquiring a livelihood,—occupations which they had followed from their childhood, and which they had inherited from an ancestry that spanned three thousand years? That a fierce people like the Arabs should have carried conquest into comparatively quiet communities, consisting of Jews and Christians who were thus practically disarmed, is not a point on which any rational man could ground a theory as to the claim of Muḥammad to be regarded as a Heaven-inspired prophet. That even the most enlightened communities of the world should be reduced by the flame and sword of an invader, is no proof that the religion of that invader is superior to all other religions. Even if the entire world should be brought under the yoke of warriors professing the Muslim faith, the fact would not prove the claims of Islâm to the credence of mankind.

To argue the contrary, would be to argue that there is a vital similarity between light and darkness; that true religion and war are in essence the same thing; that fighting is the right way to change men's religious views; that the ascendancy of the strong over the weak is (irrespective of all considerations of justice, equity, and weal) *per se* a Divine ordinance. If the ascendancy of mere brute force is to be taken as an infallible evidence of the truth of a religion, surely Christianity has immeasurably the best of the argument! Let those who incline to believe in the divi-

nity of barbaric force reflect that at the present moment, an island of minor magnitude is 'the largest Muḥammadan power in the world;' and let them associate with this reflection the fact that in acquiring such immense dominion, Christianity has not spent all its force, seeing that the people of that island are but a small fraction of the Christian population of the world. We mention this because the only standard by which an apologist of Muḥammad seems capable of guaging the soundness of a religion, appears to be that of the success or failure which its adherents experience in fighting;—a standard so opposed to the standard which the follower of Christ has learned to apply, that the only use of it is to reduce the argument to an absurdity.

Besides, the so-called Christian countries into which the Saracens extended their conquests in the earlier centuries of Islām, were such as in our own more self-respecting times, would not be acknowledged to be Christian countries at all. The apologists of Islām never weary of citing Spain as their example of this. Now, the immediate occasion of those wars of the Musalmāns which culminated in the subjugation of Spain, was such as could hardly be mentioned with impunity in a book written with a desire that it should be read by persons of common decency.\* The quarrel of the Moors with that debased country was not a religious quarrel in any sense of the term; and the occasion of it is such as shews that the Spanish,—then, as now, cursed with the blight of a rule inspired by the Papacy,—could not be designated a Christian nation excepting in ridicule and scorn. So far from that being, in any true sense of the word, a war between Christianity and Islām, it is generally admitted by the most dispassionate historians, that the grievous scourge of Muḥammadanism was permitted by an over-ruling Providence to come upon the Spanish on account of their *irreligion*! If the apologists of

\* Lake, *Islām*, 91. Cnf. Power, *Empire of the Mussulmans in Sp.in*, 55; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 963; Voltaire, *Histoire Générale*, ch. xxvi; Müller, *Universal History*, ii. 49-50.

Islām go no further than to contend that that system was designed by the good Father of men to be a scourge to Popish nations on account of their wickedness,\* we see less reason for disagreeing with them: the ground is changed. But when we cast about for those ameliorative qualities which men are entitled to expect in a religion intended by the merciful God to meet their felt needs, Christianity and Islām do not admit of comparison. The juxtaposition of the two, then becomes the juxtaposition of light and darkness, and suggests not comparison, but contrast. If, as a learned writer has put it, the Jews of Khaibar and Madīna regarded the new religion, even while Muḥammad was yet among them, as a thing so much beneath contempt when contrasted with their own, that they deemed it not fit that a Jew should even spit upon it,† what chance has it in presence of that revelation to which even the Divine religion of Moses stood in the relation of the shadow to the substance?

\* See Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 26, and reff.

† Aikman, *Salāsatu'l-Kutūb*, 33-4 (edn. Madras, 1868). The contempt of the Jews towards the pretensions of Muḥammad is also very strongly expressed in Lane (*Selections*, Introd. lxi). When their expectations and hopes were disappointed by his disavowal as to his being their long-looked for Messiah, 'the illusion was over: the Jews would have nothing to say to Islām: they set themselves, instead, to oppose and ridicule it, and vex its preacher in every way that their notorious ingenuity could devise.' What these ways were.—the public street-songs, the sarcastic insults, the lampoons,—the reader of his numerous biographies will well remember. These facts are borne witness to by the authorities of so learned a writer as Maulvī Sayyid Amr 'Alī, who says (*Life of M.ḥammed*, 77),—'When asked which they preferred,—Muḥammed's teachings or Idolatry, the Jews of Medina replied unhesitatingly,—Idolatry!' In their view—and they were eye-witnesses—it was manifest that the system put forward by Muḥammad was no improvement on the system it proposed to supersede; and in this, it may be feared, their view corresponded to that of the much-abused Dean Pridcaux (*Life of Mahomet*, 57) that 'he forced the Arabs at length to exchange their idolatry for another religion altogether as bad.'—Cnf. Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 383; Pitts, *Mahometans*, 119. The way in which the little colony of Jews in the State of Khaibar, not far the north-east of Mad'na, have maintained their independence to this day, in spite of the triumphs of Muḥammad and the Khalīfas, is a phenomenon unique, we venture to say, in all history. On this subject the reader should consult Niebuhr, *Travels in Arabia*, ii. 21, 43-4. Burckhardt, who visited the Iljāz a half-a-century later than Niebuhr, heard nothing of this little colony of Jews. But his severe illness during his sojourn at



But the apologists of Islām do not all of them ground their theory on what we may call the argument from conquest: the more enlightened of them base their contention on the tendency of the system to promote civilization, and they never weary of harping on the question of its elevating and humanizing benefits. They labour to prove that Muḥammadanism has contributed largely to art and science, to literature and philosophy, to the extension and popularizing of education and of all the characteristics of civilized existence. Now, we have already pointed out that these subjects are all of them beside the mark: still, as so much is made of them, it may be of some use to shew how they stand related to the religion of Muḥammad. We will gather up the substance of what the writers we have alluded to have said on the point.

In the first place, some of the traditions assure us that Muḥammad placed a certain value on education. We are told by these authorities that he was wont to say,—‘Teach your children poetry! It opens the mind, lends grace to wisdom, and makes the heroic virtues hereditary!’\* It is further said that when he was living in Madīna, among a poorly educated population, he was wont to give liberty to such prisoners as he held there from Makka, who succeeded in teaching twelve of the boys of Madīna the art of writing.† It is unfortunate that for these

Madīna probably prevented him from prosecuting the enquiry fully. At all events, Niebuhr's informants, being Muḥammadans, could have had but little motive for originating an untruth in reference to a matter so gravely affecting the glory and power of Muḥammad. But consult, on the point, Burckhardt, *Arabia*, ii. 407; and Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 270.

\* Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 112.

† Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Muhammad*, iii. 131. Reading and writing were not rare accomplishments among the Quraishites of Makka, though the people of Madīna were ignorant of those arts. Hence we are told, in a tradition of 'Amir given by Wāqidī, that on the heads of the seventy men of the Makkan party whom Muḥammad took as prisoners at the Battle of Badr, the prophet fixed a ransom proportioned to their means. But to each prisoner who had not the means of paying the ransom, ten (*siz*) boys of Madīna were given for instruction, and his teaching them to write was considered as a ransom. Cnf. Wāqidī, fol. *ver.* 285, quoted in Sprenger, *Life of Muhammad*, 37.

statements we have no higher authority than that of Arabs, who were, moreover, themselves admirers and partisans of Muḥammad. Such traditions are ever contradictory and mutually destructive;\* and the student who is familiar with the tone and manner of them, will receive the records we have just cited for what they are worth. That Muḥammad, who had experienced so much the disadvantage of a neglected education, should have encouraged the arts of reading and writing among his followers, and especially among the rising generation, is a circumstance that is but natural, when we remember that he wished to perpetuate among them the recitation of a book, and that he continually urged his followers to read the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians. He had a good field, too, for any education he might wish to promote among them; for the intellectual capacity of the Arabs is admitted on all hands: though they were not a race given to reading and writing: indeed, it is to this day an open question whether Muḥammad himself was possessed of either of these accomplishments.† But even admitting the utmost that can be said regarding the interest displayed by the founder of Islām in the arts of reading and writing, we do not discover how this could be made to prove that Muḥammad was authorized by God to be the supercessor of Christ.

Enthusiastic apologists of Islām are apt to exaggerate. Muḥammad did not become the educator of the Arabs in any sense that could commend itself to the ideas of modern men. He did not found any educational institutions, nor did he make any provision in his administration or laws for the creation or endowment of such, though he had every opportunity for doing so. Nor was he the creator of the intellectual life of the Arabs; for they had for ages before his time been addicted to competition in poetry and oratory at the celebrated annual Fairs.‡ It

\* Cnf, p. 115.

† Sprenger, *Life of Mohammad*, 95, 101.

‡ Of these important gatherings a full account will be found in our work entitled *The Origin and History of the Kā'ba* which, we hope, will shortly appear.

was rather by the indirect effect of his system that Muḥammad could be said to have become the educator of the Arabs. It has been well pointed out that the Qur'ān was better, even alone, than an enactment of compulsory education;\* for, to recite it became a positive duty binding on all The Faithful, and was regarded, moreover, as a work of merit which would surely receive due recognition in the Day of Judgment. The Qur'ān became the book of the people, and the arts of reading and writing came to be cultivated with the view of learning it. With the reading of the Qur'ān was associated the additional incentives of religious obligation and future bliss. To be able to read became thus a distinct object of individual ambition.† And yet, while admitting all this, the fact remains that to this day the Muḥammadans, taken as a whole, are not, in any educational sense, the wise men of the East. The recitation of certain verses of the Qur'ān which constitute the liturgy, is acquired by unnumbered millions of men who have not as much as learned the alphabet, either of the Arabic or of any other language. The necessary portions are taught, parrot-fashion, to the rising generation in very early life. The sounds of the words are taught, together with the traditional intonations; but multitudes of Muḥammadans are as ignorant of the meanings of the words, and of the sense of the liturgy, as they are of the alphabet of the language in which they are written. As a natural consequence, multitudes of them forget the prayer-forms, multitudes of them never repeat them, and multitudes are never taught them at all. Incredible as this may seem, we learn from Burckhardt what is if possible more incredible still. He tells us that until the Wāhhābī

\* Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, III.

† The reader will thus perceive that the statement sometimes made that the Qur'ān is not to be read by the common people, is not correct. Pitts, who spoke from long and intimate acquaintance with the poorer classes, enters his earnest protest against the statement, and attests the eagerness of Muḥammadans, especially when they find old age creeping upon them, to be able to read the Qur'ān for themselves.—Cnf. Pitts, *Mahometans*, 147.

conquests in southern Arabia, at the close of the last century, the Muḥammadans of Yaman were in such a condition of ignorance, even in regard to the religion, that they knew nothing more of it than the brief formula,—‘*Lā ilāha illa ’llāh wa Muḥammad Rasūlu’l-lāh*,’\* and that they never performed the prescribed rites of The Faith. The orthodox invaders had to teach them both the rites and the doctrines!† If such things happen in Arabia, what is to be expected in lands more remote from the head-quarters of The Faith!

As a general rule, again, Muhammadans, whether in the Deserts of Arabia or in the great educational centres of countries further east, are as innocent of the education they might acquire in their various mother-tongues as they are of the language in which the Qur’ān is written, and they are as indifferent to the one as to the other. We do not deny that a certain very small proportion of the Muḥammadan community have, under force of the circumstances of English rule and by the example of the more philosophic Hindûs around them, pursued a species of education in a certain contracted line; and we have no wish to ignore that in the proportion of perhaps one in five millions, they have followed the example of the Hindûs, and learned the English tongue. But the exceptions are such as only prove the general statement. It is to be noted, too, that it is only in places where the influences of Christian nations are felt, that even these exceptions exist. In Arabia, where Muḥammad holds undivided possession of the minds of the people to this day, the genuine Natives of the country, who have not fallen under Christian influences by trade and by travel, are as destitute of education as were the Arabs before the time of Muḥammad. Unless the apologists of Islām can refute these statements, they surely should

\* This is the Arabic form of the Kalima mentioned on pp. 57 and 126-7.

† Burckhardt, *Arabia*, ii. 378; with which compare p. 260. The reader who is curious on the subject will find many things in the works of the travellers in Arabia,—especially of Burckhardt, Palgrave, and Niebuhr,—which suggest very sceptical reflections on the subject of the educational impulses of The Faith.

restrain their enthusiasm. The educational effects of the work of the great Arabian are clearly things of which the least said the better. There is neither permanency, thoroughness, nor depth, in the education that is born of the Qur'ân.\*

There is everything, then, to shew that the case has been greatly over-stated. What of education is directly attributable to the Qur'ân and its author, is very poor. The educational influences of Islâm are nearly all of them indirect, and are mainly attributable to the natural brightness and alertness of the intellect of the people among whom Muḥammad lived. And as to the education acquired by a member of the Muḥammadan faith here and there, it has not resulted from his religion at all.

Nor ought it to be overlooked, that the spurt given to education soon after the new religion began to spread, owes both its existence and its failure to circumstances that were wholly independent of Muḥammad's influence,—the quality of the Arab intellect. The lack of inventiveness, originality, and grasp, has been noted by writers of very different types. The Arabs are, in fact, copyists rather than teachers, followers rather than originators. We are assured by a learned French writer, that the Arabians are 'le peuple le moins inventif du monde.'† They had not, in fact, sufficient mental grasp or power of organizing rough materials, to formulate from their own idolatry a mythological system. And even after they gave themselves, centuries later, to scientific pursuits, the same writer goes on, 'ils ont montré la

\* The reader who is desirous of pursuing this subject of the state of learning among the Saracens should consult Gregorius, *Rerum Arabicarum quæ ad historiam Siculam spectant ampla collectio*, pp. 233—40, fol. Panorm. 1790; Leo, *Historia Africa*, lib. i, p. 33; ii. 60; iii. 110; viii. 267, 272; Casiri, *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escorialensis*, ii. 38, 71, 201-2; Renaudot, *Historia Patriarchorum Alexandrinorum*, 836; Mills, *History of Muhammedanism*, 376—413; Jones, *Works*, v. 447; Pocock, *Specimen*, 153; Elmacinus, *Historia Saracenorum*, lib. ii, capp. 3, 6; Abu'l-Farajius, *Historia Dynastiarum*, 9; Meninski, *Lexicon*, i. 38, 42; Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Græca*, i. 861; Montucla, *Histoire des Mathématiques*, i. 46, 573; Colebrooke, *Hindû Algebra*, 20, 22, 70, 72.

† Dozy, *Histoire des Musulmans*, i. 12.

même absence de puissance créatrice. Ils ont traduit et commenté les ouvrages des anciens: ils ont enrichi certaines spécialités par des observations patientes, exactes, minutieuses: mais ils n'ont rien inventé, ou ne leur doit aucune idée grande et féconde.\* Thus much may be said, that not only in post-Muhammadan times, but from unknown ages before Muhammad appeared, the Arabian mind has always shewn itself lively, and intelligent, and susceptible of culture,—especially in an emotional and imaginative direction.†

In such a soil, the Qur'ân,—itself (if our Muhammadan friends will allow us to say so) the work of an Arabian mind,—found congenial and favouring elements; and with the motives to which its author appealed for the committing of it to memory, such capabilities as the Arabs possessed, received by its means an impulse which for a time produced results which, considering the literary barrenness of the Arabs, were quite exceptional and unexpected. Not only were mosques for worship erected in different places, but schools were in many places erected alongside of them; while in some instances, the work of instruction was carried on within the mosque itself.‡ 'To learn to read,' it was said by some of the early Muslims, 'is worth more than fasting; to teach it, is more meritorious than prayer.'§. Nor was the impulse limited to schools for the instruction of boys. Within a comparatively short time after the departure of Muhammad, there were, we are assured, crowded universities at Baghdâd, Damascus, Alexandria, Bassora, and Samarkand.|| Probably at no period in the world's history was literary enterprise so richly rewarded as under some of the Abbâside princes.

\* Dozy, *Histoire des Musulmans*, i. 12.

† Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, III. Cnf. Chateaubriand, *La Vie de Mahomet*; Pritchard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*; Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, Art. ARABIA.

‡ Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, III.

§ Oelsner, *Des Effets de la Religion de Mohammed*, 208.

|| The reader will find much interesting information on this subject in Newman, *Historical Sketches*, i. 66 (edn. Lond. 1876).

The victor at the poetic contests, even in those rude times, is said to have received a hundred pieces of gold, a horse, an embroidered qaftân, and a lovely slave-girl; while Abû Tamân is said to have received from his sovereign, apparently in one gift, as much as fifty thousand pieces of gold!\* Nor was it in mere literature that the work of the Saracens was of greatest service to the world, but rather in the departments of medicine, the mathematical sciences, and philosophy. In the first of these three departments, we are told, their work has never been adequately appraised, for the simple reason that barely three European students have cared to bestow the labour necessary to the study of their medical books; and as to the second department, the influence of the Arabs on the study of chemistry, algebra, and astronomy, is visible in the very nomenclature of these branches of knowledge.† It has, however, been well observed that even in these departments, in which the Arabs have undoubtedly laboured hard, it is easy to over-rate our indebtedness to them. The so-called 'Arabic Numerals' are undoubtedly of Sanskrit origin; and as to Astronomy, it is indigenous in the East, where the mode of life of the people favours and facilitates the study of it.‡ It is evident from Pitts's account that education in astronomy could not have permeated Muslim society very deeply, nor have ever become a passion among the followers of The Faith: their astronomical talents, in fact, appear to have been long 'laid up in a napkin,' for there is neither continuity nor development about it. So unique, indeed, was the ignorance that Pitts found among Muḥammadans regarding this charming branch of study, that their sentiment towards it was one of distrust and positive aversion:—'They hold it a great piece of *Arrogance*, and indeed *Profane* for any

\* Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 112. This man was the compiler of the *Ḥamāsa*,—a collection of old Arabic epigrams, odes, and elegies. For some specimens of his genius the reader may consult Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 192; the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th edn.), s. v. HAMĀSAH.

† Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 112.

‡ Stephens, *Christianity and Islām*, 147 (edn. Lond. 1877).

to dive into those things which belong to that Science. And they moreover say, That no man in the World knows when the *New-Moon* is, but *God alone* knows. That none but Christians would presume to enquire into such *hidden* and *abstruse* matters.\* Even to so uninstructed a man as Pitts then was, the ignorance of Muḥammadans of this branch of knowledge was patent.† And as to Algebra, we are told by so high an authority as Colebrooke, that the Hindûs far excelled the Arabs in this science.‡ So that, upon the whole, the researches of the present century, as far as they have gone, have tended to lower the estimate of the literary wealth supposed to lie enshrined in what has been called the 'intactis Arabum thesauris.'§ As to the cultivation of art among Muslims, the blame undoubtedly rests with Muḥammad for the peculiar attitude of his followers towards it from the first.|| The arts of statuary and painting were denounced by the early

\* Pitts, *A Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mahometans*, 79, (4th edn. Lond. 1738). The Italics are, of course, Pitts's. At the period referred to (1678—1695) poor Pitts was in captivity among the Muḥammadans of Algiers. After his escape, he became a minister of the Gospel in connexion with the English Episcopal Church, and became the author of a volume of Sermons, a copy of which may be seen in the library of the British Museum.

† The reader will find some interesting information on this subject in Sale, *Prod. Disc.* 22-3. The limitations of the Astronomy of the Arabs are indicated by Sir William Jones, who describes their contribution to the subject as 'the mere amusement of giving names to the stars'—Cnf. Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 200.

‡ 'Learning and science,' says Burckhardt (*Arabia*, i. 389),—he is speaking of Makka,—'cannot be expected to flourish in a place where every mind is occupied in the search of gain or of paradise.' The works of this writer, indeed, are loaded with testimony shewing that in no place in the Islâmic world does learning thrive so badly as in the two Sacred cities of The Faith.

§ Horace, *Odes*, i. 29, and iii. 24, cited in *The Christian Remembrancer* (Jan. 1855), 147; Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 152.

|| Even so philosophic a writer as Lecky uses very strong language on this point. He says (*The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, i. 246),—'In this way Mahomet preserved his religion from idolatry, but he made it the deadly enemy of art. How much art has lost by the antagonism it is impossible to say.' Indeed, on this whole subject, the voice of all dispassionate writers on Philosophy and Art is as one. See also Alley, *Vindicia Christiana*, 225 (edn. Lond. 1836); Volney, *Travels in Syria*, ch. xxxix.



Muslims as incentives to idolatry. To attribute this to the idolatry which Muslims tell us existed in the Church of Rome, does not release them from the charge of narrowness. The misuse of these valuable branches of æsthetical culture by others, is a very poor reason for the eternal extinction of them. But this species of iconoclasm long ago gave way in some directions. Even yet, however, Muslim doctors may be found who forbid, under pain of being cast into hell, the delineation of any thing that has life. But while the statues of human beings are forbidden, other works of art are allowed by some of the divines,—excepting, of course, in mosques.\* One of the arts, however, has too rooted a place in human nature to be abandoned; and if we are to credit all accounts which the Saracen musicians give concerning their own influence among the people, they brought their art, notwithstanding Muḥammad's proscription of it, to a high state of efficiency.† Clearly, therefore, the achievements of his followers in these directions are not attributable to Islām, whether directly or otherwise.

The whole situation has been well delineated by Major Osborn in a work too little known.‡ It is quite true that when Islām penetrates to countries lower in the scale of humanity than were the Arabs of Muḥammad's day, it has the faculty of raising them to that level: but this, upon the whole, is a doubtful blessing, for it is achieved at a tremendous cost. It reproduces in its new converts the characteristics which have marked its

\* Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, ii. 2; Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 137; Syed Ameer Ali, *Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, 331 (edn. Lond. 1873). 'They blame the Papists,' says Pitts (*Mahometans*, 55) 'for having so many *Trumperies* in their Churches, and have a greater Respect for *Protestants*, because they have not the like. I once had a Draught of an *English Ship*, which I hung against the Wall; but my Patroon perceiving it had a *Cross* in its *Ancient*, obliged me to blot it out, and then seemed well enough pleased with the picture.'

† Berington, *Literary History of the Middle Ages*, 426. The reader will find some interesting things in reference to this subject of the music of the Arabs in Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia*, i. 345 et alii locis (edn. Lond. 1838).

‡ Osborn, *Islām under the Arabs*, 93—5.

adherents from the earliest period,—an impenetrable self-esteem, an unintelligent scorn, and a blind, irrational hatred of all creeds but one. And thus is the capacity for further advance destroyed;—the mind is obdurately shut to the entrance of any purer light. The transient gleam of culture which illuminated Baghdâd under the earlier Abbâside Khalifas is sometimes regarded as a legitimate fruit of Islâm. This is a grievous error. When the Arabs overwhelmed Syria and Persia they brought with them no new knowledge to take the place of the knowledge which had preceded them in those countries. There, Badawis of the Desert, as they were, they found themselves all at once the masters of vast and comparatively enlightened territories, and they soon discovered that they had everything to learn: they were compelled to put themselves to school under the very peoples they had vanquished. And the result was that the Persians and Syrians, conquered though they were and tributary, retained in their hands the control of the administrative machinery by reason of the ignorance of their conquerors; and the Abbâside Khalifas were borne into power by means of a Persian revolution headed by a Persian slave. Then began the endeavour to make the old Greek philosophy of Syria and the deep and beautiful thoughts of Zoroaster take root and flourish on the hard and barren soil of the Muslim creed; and like every attempt to make a frail exotic flourish in uncongenial soil, it ended only in failure. It imparted indeed a kind of borrowed lustre to this period of Muḥammadan history; but that lustre proved to be but transient and unreal. The more orthodox among the Muḥammadans knew that their Faith and the wisdom of the Greeks could not amalgamate, and they fought fiercely against the innovators. Successive swarms of barbarians swooping down from northern Asia, tore up the fragile plant by the roots and scattered its blossoms to the winds.\* The new comers embraced the Creed

\* The reader who would pursue this point might satisfy his curiosity by perusal of the first volume of the admirable *Historical Sketches* of Dr. J. H. Newman.

of Islâm in all its primitive simplicity, and true to the savage nature, they abhorred and repudiated the refinements which the Persians would fain have grafted on it. And the barbarians won the day. Not the glories of Baghdâd,—which were but the after-glow of the thought and culture which sank with the fall of the Sassânides and the expulsion of the Byzantine emperors,—not those, but the present condition of Central Asia is the legitimate fruit of The Faith.—And the same is true of Spain during the Muḥammadan ascendancy there. The blossom and the fruitage which Islâm seemed to put forth there, were in fact due to influences altogether alien to The Faith,—to contact with Jewish and Christian thought; for when the Moors were driven back into northern Africa, all that blossom and fruitage withered away, and the country whither they went sank into the condition of intellectual barrenness and political anarchy in which we see it at the present time.—In fine, there are to be found in the history of The Faith all the elements of greatness:—courage, endurance, self-sacrifice, faith; but enclosed, as they are, within the narrow walls of a crude theology and a barbarous polity, from which the capacity to grow and the liberty to modify have been sternly cut off, these noble qualities work no deliverance upon the earth. They are strong only for destruction; and when that work of destruction is over, they either prey upon each other, or they beat themselves to death against the bars of their prison-house. The darvesh, ejaculating ‘Allâh! Allâh!’ as he revolves in a series of rapid gyrations until he drops senseless, is an exact image of the course of the history of States where Islâm is in the ascendant. When they cease to be racked by revolutions, they succumb to the poison diffused by a corrupt moral atmosphere. The history of Muḥammadanism everywhere is but a dreary monotonous commentary upon the self-evident maxim that no permanent structure can be raised on a foundation of sand,—no durable or humanizing policy upon a basis of Fatalism, Despotism, Polygamy, and Slavery.

Upon the whole, then, we can hardly summarize this portion of the enquiry better than in the words of a very discriminating writer of our own time. 'With regard,' says Mr. Stephens, 'to the science, literature, and art of the Saracens, of which one has to hear and read so much, while not for a moment desiring either to question their reality or to under-rate their value, one is compelled to doubt very much whether they were, in any sense, direct products of Islâm; it certainly is not by any means generally evident to what extent they could be said to have been products of Islâm at all. Where did the Saracens get these things? They certainly did not bring them from Mecca or Medina; and if they evolved them from their own 'inner consciousness,' the credit is due not to their religion, but to their natural gifts and to Him who created them. So far, however, from their being possessed with a passion for art for its own sake, as is the case with every true genius in that department of culture, they exercised themselves rather to destroy all the literature and art of Greece and Rome of which they could obtain possession.'\* It was only to be expected that the severe monotheism of the Saracens would brook no contamination with the profuse polytheism and licentious mythology of those countries. No accuracy of thought, no delicate finish of language could, in their judgment, compensate for the stain of error which blots the work of the classical genius. The colourless writings of Hippocrates and Galen, Euclid and Aristotle, were freely translated and widely read among them: yet even the liberal-minded son of the celebrated Hârûnâ'r-Rashîd, when he preferred to bring books instead of captives as his spoils from conquered Greece, left behind him in contempt the Plays of Sophocles and Æschylus, the Histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, and the Orations of Demosthenes:—he left behind him, in fact, all that could have opened a new world to the mind of the Oriental.† Now, all this happened in what is

\* Stephens, *Christianity and Islâm*, 146.

† Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 110.

known as the Golden Age of Saracen history. If such deliberate choice of darkness rather than light marked the best period of the history, there is but little difficulty in crediting as possible the story of the burning of the Alexandrian library,\* at the twilight period when Islâm was only beginning to emerge from its native Deserts.

The manner in which this catastrophe occurred serves well to shew the indebtedness of Muslim to Christian literati, and the form which Muslim appreciation and gratitude assumed. 'Amrû ibna'l-'Âs,† conqueror and governor of Egypt,‡ was an orator and poet, a lover of learning and of learned men.§ His literary gifts had been displayed in his earlier days, when he (like so many of his fellow-countrymen) wrote lampoons on Muḥammad.|| This conduct he afterwards came to regret, and embraced The Faith.¶

\* For a most interesting account of this magnificent store of the wisdom of the ancients the reader is referred to Rollin, *Ancient History*, vol. v. pp. 19—22 (edn. Lond. 1841).

† Also spelt 'Aas,' 'Aasi,' and 'Aass,' but not 'Dass,' as Mr. Lake's printer (p. 96) has it. The form 'Amrû is also spelt 'Amr,—the â being added merely to prevent the word from being confounded with the name of 'Umar. The letters in Arabic are exactly the same in each case, عمر,—the vowel of the initial consonant being omitted. Cnf. Burckhardt, *Arabia*, ii. 416.

‡ Elmacinus, *Historia Saracenica*, i. 23-4; Ockley, *History of the Saracens*, i. 344 seqq.; Abu'l-Farajius, *Historia Dynastiarum*, 9; Pocock, *Specimen*, 112.

§ Ockley, *History of the Saracens*, i. 312; Forster, *Mohometanism Unveiled*, i. 46.

|| Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, iv. 90; Irving, *Life of Mahomet*, 48.

¶ This man was the son of a courtesan of Makka, who seems to have rivalled in fascination the Phrynes and Aspasia of Greece, and to have numbered some of the nobles of the land among her lovers. Who may have been his real father is not known. When his mother gave birth to him, she mentioned several of the tribe of the Banî Quraish who had equal claims to the paternity. The oldest of her admirers was a man named 'Âs ('Âs ibni Wâyl, of the *Sahm* family) and to him the infant was declared to have most resemblance; and from this fact he came to receive, in addition to his own name of 'Amrû, the patronymic *Ibna'l-'Âs*, 'son of 'Âs.' As if to atone for the blemish of his birth, Nature had lavished upon this child some of the choicest of her gifts; and while yet young, he came to be one of the most popular poets of Arabia,—being distinguished no less for the pungency of his satirical allusions than for the captivating sweetness of his more serious lays. When Muḥammad first announced himself a prophet, this youth assailed him with lampoons and humorous madrigals; and these, being, as they were, exactly the kind of thing

He was fond of the society of the learned; and he sought to make up, by association with them, for the deficiencies of his early education. He found a congenial companion in a Native of Alexandria, the celebrated John the Grammarian,—the last disciple of Ammonius. This man was a Christian, of the sect of the Jacobites, and was surnamed *Philoponus*,\* 'a lover of labour,'—John the Industrious. He had attained to eminence for his laborious treatises of various kinds,—such as, works on Grammar and Philology, and Commentaries on Moses and Aristotle.† The Arabian conqueror and chief, being naturally of a more inquiring and liberal spirit than his Muslim co-religionists, interested himself during his leisure hours in conversation with this Christian scholar, and an intimacy was soon formed between them. Now, after the capture of Alexandria, an account was taken of all the public property; but the collection of books and manuscripts which constituted the Alexandrian library was omitted. It is alleged that, in an unlucky moment, John gave information to 'Amrû of this unnoticed treasure; and that, emboldened by the terms of familiar intercourse which had sprung up between them, the loving student went so far as to ask that the collection might be given to him.‡ In *his* opinion the treasure was inestimable, 'however contemptible,' to use Gibbon's term, 'it may have been in the estimation of the barbarians.' 'Amrû, it is said, was inclined to gratify the wish of his friend, but could not give effect to his inclinations without first referring the matter to the

to fall in with the taste of the Arabs in respect of poetry, obtained a wide circulation, and proved greater impediments to the growth of the new religion than the bitterest persecution. Thus was 'Amrû, who afterwards made such a distinguished figure in the history of The Faith, one of the most redoubtable and effective of the assailants of its founder.—Cnf. Irving, *Life of Mahomet*, 49.

\* *Φιλόπονος*;—not 'Philoponus,' as Mr. Lake's printer (p. 96) calls him.

† The reader who is interested in the achievements of this man in the realm of philosophy may consult Sir Wm. Hamilton's *Lectures on Metaphysics*, i. 114, 200, 250, and ii. 7, 38, 155 (edn. Edinb. and Lond. 1861).

‡ Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, 197.

Khalifa, his master.\* To this came the famous answer of 'Umar, —an answer embodying a sophism that might have weight with an ignorant fanatic, but which could only excite the astonishment and regret of a philosopher,—‘If these writings of the Greeks agree with the Qur’ân—the Book of God—they are superfluous, and need not be preserved; but if they disagree, they are pernicious and ought to be destroyed!’† The sentence was carried out with blind obedience; and the volumes of parchment were distributed to the four thousand baths of the city,—not necessarily to heat them, perhaps, but probably rather to kindle them. Rollin, however, says ‘they were used for fuel instead of wood.’ However this may be, such was the almost incredible quantity of literature that six months were barely sufficient for the consumption of this precious fuel.‡ The story is given by Abu'l-Faragius:§ it is doubted, as everyone knows, by Gibbon, but received by many scholars,—among whom are such high authorities as Von Hammer and Pocock.||

One of the arguments on which Gibbon bases his rejection of the story is given in the following words:—‘The rigid sentence of Omar is repugnant to the sound and orthodox precept of the Mahometan casuists: they expressly declare that the religious books of the Jews and christians¶ which are acquired by the right of war, should never be committed to the flames,’\*\*—the reason being ‘the respect due to the name of God’ which those books contain. This has a good sound; but Gibbon is compelled to add that ‘a more destructive zeal may perhaps be attributed

\* Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, 197.

† Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 392.

‡ Cnf. Ockley, *History of the Saracens*, 293-4 (edn. Lond. 1870); Prideaux, *Connection of the Old and New Testaments*, pt. II, bk. i, anno. 284.

§ Abu'l-Faragius, *Historia Dynastiarum*, 180 (p. 114 of edn. Oxon. 1663).

|| Pocock, *Specimen*, 170; Harris, *Philological Enquiries*, 251; White, *Bampton Lecture*, 335, and the Notes, p. lx.

¶ On the singular frailty of the great historian respecting the mode in which this word should be written, we have had occasion to remark elsewhere (see p. 124).

\*\* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 956.

to the first successors of Mahomet;' which is the same as saying that the early Khalifas were not so scrupulous regarding the destruction of the books of Jews and Christians, though they were known to be certain to contain the Divine name. Now, 'Umar was the first but one of The Successors,—he having succeeded to the Khilāfat only two years after Muḥammad's death. So that, Gibbon may be said, in effect, to concede the point as to at least the high probability of the destruction of the library having been effected, as Abu'l-Faragius records, by the order of this Khalifa. The only authority whom Gibbon quotes in support of the discredit he thus casts upon the story is a writer so late as Reland: he cites no Muḥammadan author contemporary with the alleged piece of Vandalism: but he is of opinion that the report of a solitary witness who wrote at the end of six hundred years on the confines of Media, is overbalanced by the fact of the silence of two annalists of an earlier date, both of whom were Christians and both of them Natives of Egypt,—the more ancient of whom, the patriarch Eutychius, having amply described the Conquest of Alexandria. But it may safely be urged that the positive assertion of a historian of such unquestioned credit as Abu'l-Faragius is worthily held to be, cannot be set aside by an argument that is, after all, merely negative.\* Gibbon's reference to Aulus Gellius,† to Ammianus Marcellinus,‡ and to Orosius,§ as speaking of the libraries of Alexandria in the past tense, are (as Enfield has pointed out) foreign to the purpose; for these writers refer only to the destruction of books there in the time of Julius Cæsar,—some seven centuries before.|| Subsequently to that period, large

\* Enfield, *History of Philosophy*, 420 (edn. Lond. 1837).

† Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, lib. vi, cap. 17.

‡ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historia*, lib. xxii, cap. 16 (p. 314 of the edn. of Valesius, Paris, 1681).

§ Orosius, *Historiarum adversus Paganos Libri VII*, lib. vi, cap. 17 (p. 421 of the edn. of Havercamp, 1738).

|| Mills would guard his reader against a very natural misapprehension regarding the various libraries of Alexandria which have at different times been for various reasons destroyed. 'When we talk,' says he (*History of Muhammadanism*, 381-2),



libraries must have been continually accumulating, during the long period in which the various schools of philosophy flourished in that city. The destruction of the various libraries there in the time of Cæsar, as also the growth of the great library to which we refer, are carefully related in detail by Rollin, and by many other historians.\*

But, in truth, the fact of the destruction of the library having taken place by the order of 'Umar, does not, as Gibbon supposes, rest on the authority of but one man. So high an authority as Charles Mills (who, it should be observed, does not by any means write in an anti-Muhammadan spirit) exhibits the rare spectacle of a scholar of profound reading, voluntarily submitting to the humiliation of withdrawing, after sufficient research, his opinions formerly published. He writes,—‘The Saracens, as well as other good people, occasionally condemned books *au feu*. Absorbed with ideas of the conquest or conversion of the world, the early Successors of the Prophet held in equal contempt the religion and the learning of their new subjects and tributaries. Their most pious act in this line’—by which we understand him to mean, the act at once most prominent and noteworthy, and at the same time the most expressive of the genius and tendency of their Faith—‘was the destroying of a large library at Alexandria. It was done by the order of the Caliph Omar, when Amrou conquered Egypt. The fact does not, as I once thought, rest on the sole authority of Abul-Pharajius: Macrisi,† and also Abdollatif (the writer of a work expressly on Egyptian antiqui-

‘of the destruction of the Alexandrian library, let us not be deceived by words. It must not be imagined that the library of the Ptolomies was the one which the Saracens pillaged. That ‘*elegantia regum curaque egregium opus*’ was destroyed in Cæsar’s time; and the new collection which Cleopatra formed, was dissipated in the wars which the Christians made upon the Pagans.’—Cnf. Newton, *The Prophecies*, 196-7.

\* Cnf. Rollin, *Ancient History*, i. 21, and v. 20 (and references there); Arnold, *Islam and Christianity*, 182-3. Consult, also, Horne’s *Introduction to the Study of Bibliography*.

† Cnf. Macrisi, cited by White, *Egyptica*, 56, 65.

ties\*) mention the circumstance. I hesitated, with Langlés, from crediting the story on the authority of Abul-Pharajius alone; but the authorities cited by Macrisi and Abdollatif removed his scepticism, and I willingly retract the error I made in my first edition.† It should be added that so high an authority as the Baron de Sacy, in a long note to his translation of Abdollatif, has collected various testimonies from the works of Arabian writers, preserved in the Royal Library in Paris, which concur in establishing the credibility of the narrative of Abu'l-Farajius.‡ It is, indeed, impossible to regard it (as Gibbon would insinuate) as a fiction invented by the Armenian historian.

It is only charitable to suppose that Gibbon was sincerely convinced of the repugnance of such coarse Vandalism to the genius of Muslim casuistry. But the student of Islâmic tradition will be neither astonished nor deceived by what is so transparently an after-thought. It clearly is, like so much of the church-literature of Muḥammadans, a makeshift designed to mitigate the odium of an act which no man not a genuine fanatic could have been guilty of. Indeed, even Gibbon, notwithstanding his well-known prejudices, does not see his way to giving a distinct denial to the story: he merely says, by way of stating his own position regarding the matter,—‘I am strongly tempted to deny both the fact and its consequences.’ We are the more earnest in mentioning this, because of the tendency there appears to be to accept without further enquiry the opinions of this great writer, and because of the disposition we observe in men to conclude that because Gibbon failed to be satisfied with the grounds on which the story rests, therefore the story is a fabrication,—forgetting, altogether, that there may have been evidence of which

\* Abdollatiphus, *Hist. viâ*, 115 (edn. 4to); Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 393.

† Mills, *History of Muhammedanism*, 381. On the whole subject the reader who would follow the matter up, should consult the Dissertation of Mons. Bonamy on the subject of the ‘Alexandrian library’ in *Les Mémoires de l’Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. ix, and the Fifth Year of the *Magasin Encyclopédique*, tom. iii, p. 384.

‡ De Sacy, *Relation de l’Egypte*, 240.

Gibbon was not cognizant (which was, as we have seen, the actual fact). That such a tendency does really exist will be seen in the case of so profound a scholar as Baron von Humboldt, who apparently on no better ground than that of Gibbon's *doubt*, hesitates not to brand the story as a 'myth.'\* We easily believe what we *wish* to believe. Hence we find that though Gibbon found the story of the burning of the library by 'Umar too much for his historical digestion, he records the opinion that it was destroyed several centuries before—*viz.* circa 389 A.D.—by the fanaticism of Theophilus, the Christian Archbishop of Alexandria,—and he does so without hesitation, and without the faintest apparent symptom of a doubt.†

Lake adds to the argument of Gibbon—to whom, as we have already noted,‡ he acts a faithful henchman—the statement that such an act was inconsistent with the character of 'Amrû.§ Under some circumstances, such an argument might have relieved the dreariness of the episode: it happens, however, that the true character of 'Amrû is well known.|| Besides, we submit that the point turns rather upon the character of one greater than 'Amrû, and whose mandate 'Amrû would not have dared to contravene.¶ It was beyond his power to alienate any portion of the spoil; the consent of the Khalifa was necessary.\*\* The violent and irrational nature of this Vandal among the Khalifas is but too well known to the student of Saracenic history;†† and it is an

\* Humboldt, *Cosmos*, ii. 582.

† Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 467. ‡ Cnf. p. 212.

§ Lake, *Islâm*, 97. Cnf. Ockley, *History of the Saracens*, 84—92.

|| Consult on this point, Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, passim.

¶ Rollin, *Ancient History*, vol. v, p. 21. Of gigantic stature, great courage, and prodigious strength, the chief characteristic of 'Umar was *fierceness*. His savage aspect appalled even the boldest, and his very walking-stick struck more terror into beholders than another man's sword. Such are the words of the Arabian historian Al-Wâqidî; and the events of Umar's life after he became Khalifa, prove that these words of the historian are not chargeable with exaggeration.

\*\* Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 392.

†† Müller, *Universal History*, ii. 46. For instances of his curious destructiveness of temperament, the reader should consult Taylor, *History of Mohammedanism*, 175.

object of special glory to The Faithful to the present hour. He exhibited, if possible, more of the spirit of Muḥammadanism than even Muḥammad himself did, and his reckless and wanton destruction of treasures held sacred by persons of other religions has earned for him a notoriety unique among the most faithful copyists of the Original. The other Khalifas—Abû Bîkr, 'Uthmân, and 'Alî—were mildness itself in comparison with 'Umar,—the very archetype of the Wāḥḥabî of the earlier years of our own century.\* Characterized, though his reign was, by all the worst fruits of his religion, the act of folly which history thus fastens upon him has done more to familiarize posterity with his name than all the other devastations committed under his authority.† Whether the world is indebted to the fanaticism of 'Umar or not, for this coarse destruction of the untold treasures of the wisdom of the ancients,‡ and whether the words of the sentence of destruction were or were not the product of his peculiar genius,—are points which it is now-a-days impossible to decide and fruitless to discuss: but, as has been well observed, if the words are not his, at least they are full of historical versimilitude and significance.§ Lest it should be supposed that this opinion is the offspring of Christian sentiment in Dr. Marcus Dods, we may add that the elder Disraeli, who must be acquitted of any suspicion of collusion with the Christian teacher, gives his opinion in concurrent language. He remarks, in referring to this lamentable

\* Palgrave, in his *Central and Eastern Arabia*, has surpassed all writers in the exquisite delicacy of his judgment on the Wāḥḥabî renaissance.

† Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 392.

‡ We should here observe that beyond the statement that the parchments supplied the public baths of Alexandria for a half-a-year, there is no clue by which the measure of the loss might be approximately estimated. There were, in fact, several libraries in different parts of the city; and it is now impossible to ascertain whether the one now under consideration was or was not one of those that had been previously destroyed. If it was not, the loss to the world is one which it clearly is impossible to exaggerate.

§ Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 110. As to the character of 'Umar as a ruler, note some just remarks in Taylor, *History of Mohammedanism*, 174.

catastrophe, that though modern paradox attempt to deny the facts of the story, yet the tale would not be singular even if it should turn out to be true,—inasmuch as it perfectly suits the character of ‘a bigot, a barbarian, and a blockhead!’ He goes on to shew that we owe to the same destructive spirit of the Muḥammadan religion the loss, by this same resort to the agency of devouring flame, much of the most ancient literature of the Persians.\* These invaluable records of Persian genius and learning, collected by the zeal of the Sassânide princes in Modain were hurled, by the order of ‘Umar into the waters of the Tigris.†

The obvious conclusion, from the facts thus brought together, is that the burden of proof rests with those who deny the story. The grounds on which Gibbon bases his scepticism regarding it, we have seen to be worthless: it would have been interesting to have learnt on what grounds so eminently careful a writer as Humboldt was would justify the contemptuous term by which he characterizes it. A story so long credited, upon high authority, calls for more critical treatment than, from all that appears, the worthy Baron devoted it. Thus much, at any rate, seems beyond possibility of doubt,—that the story is in entire harmony with the known character of ‘Umar and with the practices of Muḥammadans in the earlier ages of The Faith.

Taking the account as recorded, it is impossible to estimate the loss which literature has sustained by the destruction of the treasures of this library. It is true that in speaking of the libraries of times which preceded the invention of printing, we must not be misled by magnificent descriptions, or by the ample catalogues of their contents. The manuscripts were numerous, indeed, but the matter they contained would in modern print be compressed within a space much smaller than might at first be supposed. The fifteen ‘Books,’ for example, of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, which in classic times composed literally as many

\* D’Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, 18 (edn. Lond. 1866).

† Taylor, *History of Mohammedanism*, 175.

volumes, are all of them together reduced now-a-days to a few dozens of pages. Still, we cannot renounce the belief that though much of the ancient literature has escaped the ravages of ignorance and the calamities of war, a great deal that would have been of value and interest perished in the sack of this famed metropolis.\*

But notwithstanding the Vandalism which marked the early days of Islām,† there were some works of literature and art which these enthusiasts in the pursuit of knowledge could not destroy. They could not destroy *every* copy of a Greek or Roman classic, they could not destroy the Great Pyramid, they could not break down every Roman arch, nor did they demolish the mighty dome of the beautiful temple of St. Sufia. And though the true spirit of Ishmael swayed the conduct of the party of war, yet there was among the Arabs a party of peace, however weak and unheeded. There were men among them who were wise enough to study the master-pieces of thought and art which had evolved themselves from the genius of Roman and of Greek, and who had enough of intellectual capacity to turn their study to good practical account. And what these men had learned in the eastern part of the Roman dominions, they taught in the western part of it and in Persia; and they reproduced, possibly with improvements, in Cordova and Bagdād, what they had seen in Byzantium.‡

But these men's range of study among the Greek authors was limited, and their work upon them was confined to translating books on physics and metaphysics. Gibbon, with all his

\* Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 394.

† Should any one be in doubt as to the propriety of this manner of alluding to the best days of The Faith, he may find assistance by carefully studying the valuable work of Sir William Muir just mentioned, the *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, the materials of which are drawn from Muḥammadan sources. In the entire history of barbarity and vice, it would be difficult to match the picture there given of the reigns of the Four Khalīfas as drawn by Muḥammadan authors themselves.

‡ Stephens, *Islām and Christianity*, 146. †

research, is obliged at last to confess that he failed to discover even so much as a record of any translation into Arabic of a single Greek poet, orator, or historian. We cannot rate very highly the literary genius of a people who thus, when they had the best possible opportunity, neglected the richest treasures of human thought in the departments of poetry, eloquence, and history, which the world has ever possessed. And what shall we say by way of apology for the spirit that could have led to the wilful destruction of these treasures? Muslims never weary of assuring us of the high quality of the productions of native writers in the Arabic language. All that they say may be true of the literary style of such writings, for the genius of the language itself favours them,—Arabic being a language that so readily lends itself to cadence that we are assured by so accomplished a witness as Burton, that it is almost impossible not to rhyme in it.\* But what are we to say if the moment an Arabic work is translated into any other tongue, all that makes it of any value vanishes? It is difficult to understand how a work that cuts so very insignificant a figure in translation could, in point of subject-matter, be positively first-rate even in its original dress.

If, then, it be true that Muhammadans picked up their science and art second-hand,—such portions as they obtained of both consisting of those fragments which barely escaped destruction at the hands of the earlier Muslim invaders,—is it quite truthful to attribute such advances as they made in these departments to the genius of Islâm? Supposing Christianity had been left to pursue its course in Syria and Palestine, Asia Minor and Turkey, Egypt, Northern Africa, and Spain, unmolested by the Saracen invader, would not science, literature, the arts, and everything else that makes up civilization, have gone on flourishing, at least as well as they have flourished in those countries since they came under Muslim rule, or as well as they flourish now in those countries that are still under it. They could not have flourished less

\* Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 78.

than they do in most of those countries at the present moment; and it is hard to believe that they would not have flourished in the absence of Muslim rule, not only as well as they have flourished under it, but a great deal better.\* One of the most recent travellers in Arabia, and at the same time one of the most accomplished in every particular that goes to make a man a trustworthy witness, bears strong testimony to the high intellectual and practical qualities of the Arabs. He sees capacities and aptitudes in the race for accomplishing great things in science and art; but he adds,—‘When the Koran and Mecca shall have disappeared from Arabia, then, and then only, can we expect to see the Arab assume that place in the ranks of civilization from which Mahomet and his work have, more than any other cause, long held him back.’† Thus in Arabia, just as in Persia and the Turkish empire, Islām, when left to itself and allowed the freest scope for its genius, so far from creating a love of learning and promoting its advancement, has somehow the very opposite effect,—of consuming energy and retarding progress.‡ It is, in fact, simple folly to suppose that any literary art can make progress among Muḥammadans so long as despotism, indolence, and superstition,—ever the great enemies of literary and scientific advancement,—continue to maintain their ground among them.§ That the testimony we have thus brought together under the present head may if possible not be open to the time-honoured stigma of one-sidedness, we will conclude by citing the deliber-

\* Stephens, *Christianity and Islām*, 148.

† Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 175. The capabilities of the Arab mind are attested by all competent authorities; and so far from Islām having tended to lead it on to higher stages of development, it appears that the intelligence of the Arabs of the times before Muḥammad was noted by persons not of their race, and the comparison of the Arabs of Islāmic and pre-Islāmic times is rather in favour of the latter—Cnf. Ecchelenis, *Historia Orientalis*, 142, 147; Hottinger, *Archæologia Orientalis*, 10; Pocock, *Specimen*, 135; Wright, *Christianity in Arabia*, 7–9; Plinius, *Naturalis Historia*, lib. vi, cap. 28.

‡ Stephens, *Christianity and Islām*, 149.

§ Niebuhr, *Travels in Arabia*, ii. 437.



ate judgment of one who has never yet been charged with being tainted with the animus of a Christian fanatic against the believers in the religion of 'Holy Mecca.' Voltaire exclaims, in his own nervous way,—'I detest the Turks, as the tyrants of their wives, and the enemies of the arts!'<sup>\*</sup>

But the tendency of Islâm to the promotion of intellectual pursuits is argued by its apologists on a broader basis than that of the sciences and the arts. One writer has, in late years, assigned to the Arab thinkers the honourable function of actually creating modern philosophy. 'Theology and philosophy,' says this writer, 'became, in the hands of the Moors, fused and blended. The Greek scientific theory as to the origin of things, interwound with the Hebrew faith in a Creator. And thus did speculation become, in a new and higher sense, theistic; and the interpretation of the universe became the explication of God's relation to It, and of its relation to God.'<sup>†</sup> This is but a specimen of the way in which the attainments of Muḥammadans have been over-rated rather than depreciated.<sup>‡</sup> Dr. Dods points out that speculation had become theistic long before such a thing as an Arab philosophy came into existence. The same questions that form the staple of modern philosophy, were discussed at Alexandria as much as three centuries before the time of Muḥammad. There is scarcely a single Christian author of the third or fourth century who does not write in presence of the great problem of God's connexion with the world, and of the relation of the Infinite to the Finite, of the unseen intangible Spirit to the crass material universe. What we have to do here, however, is not to ascertain whether modern philosophy be truly the offspring of the unexpected marriage between Aristotle and the Qur'ân, but whether the religion promulgated in the Qur'ân is or is not obstructive of intellectual effort and enlightenment. And enough has been said

<sup>\*</sup> Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 116.

<sup>†</sup> Fairbairn, *Studies*, 398.

<sup>‡</sup> Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 113.

to shew that though there may, on the one hand, be nothing in that religion to necessarily and directly tend to obstruct either science or philosophy, yet when we consider the history and achievements of that race,—the Turkish race, which has for six centuries been before the world as the leading representation of Islâm,—we are inclined to add that there is nothing in the religion which necessarily leads on the mind to the highest intellectual efforts.\*

This is the opinion not only of the judicious writer just quoted, but also of Berington, who sums up a pretty full and interesting account of Saracenic learning with the remark that it 'has experienced too much prodigality of praise.'† Even Oelsner admits that the results are somewhat disappointing.‡ Freeman, too, thinks that he discerns a prevalent disposition to assert for the Saracens an untrue monopoly of excellence in science and philosophy; and he calls attention to the fact that many of the most famous literary men at the courts of the Khalifas were not Muḥammadans at all, but Jews and Christians.§

Our only concern is to state with exactitude the achievements of the Arabs in the realm of philosophy. As the point is only indirectly related to the great subject of the present work, we shall hardly be suspected of any such vice as that of the wilful distortion of evidence or suppression of fact. We have already admitted freely the important part which the Saracens have played in relation to the knowledge which they found ready-made in the territories of the Romans and the Greeks. And we would add further, that some of them at first appeared even more zealous to learn the contents of the books of the vanquished Greeks than was even the contiguous empire of the Romans; and that some of them were keen students of the works of Aristotle at a

\* Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 116.

† Berington, *Literary History of the Middle Ages*, 455.

‡ Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 113.

§ Freeman, *History of the Saracens*, 60—94.

time when the very language in which he wrote was, in a measure, unknown in Roman Christendom.\* The commentaries of Averroes, moreover, on the most exact of Greek philosophers, are thought by some to be worthy of the text. It was at the Muḥammadan university in his native city of Cordova, and from Arabian teachers, that this precursor of Spinoza derived those germs of thought whose fruit may be seen in the whole history of scholastic theology. And just before Averroes entered those halls, a young man passed from them equipped with the same learning, and gifted with a genius and penetration of judgment which have made his opinions final wherever the name of Maimonides is known.† Undoubtedly, these two fellow-citizens,—the Arabic-speaking Muḥammadan and the Arabic-speaking Jew,—have left their mark deep on all subsequent Jewish and Christian learning. And even though it be doubted whether their influence has been wholly beneficial, they may well be claimed as instances of the intellectual ardour which Muḥammadan learning could supply.‡ It would, however, be scarcely truthful to suppress the fact that only one of these scholars was a Muḥammadan, that neither of them was an Arab, that when they entered that seat of learning they took their native genius with them, and that the educational projects of Muḥammadans in the countries they had conquered were in great measure the result of the enlightened spirit of Jews, Christians, and other civilized peoples whose examples were all around them. It is easy to place too high an estimate on the relations of the Saracens to philosophy and learning. As middle-men, indeed, or transmitters of the products of other men's genius, the literati of Arabia have made their mark, and their importance in the work of translating into Arabic can scarcely be over-estimated. But what have they,

\* Dods, *Muhammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 114.

† De Sacy, *Relation d'Égypte par Abd-Allatif*, 487 (edn. Paris, 1810).

‡ Dods, *Muhammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 114. As to the religious opinions of Averroes the reader should consult the works of Neander and Mesheim.

as a nation, given us, in the realm of philosophy, which we did not possess before from other sources, and which is the genuine creation of an Arab? The utmost that, in regard to this point, can be said is that with the birth of Islām there was a certain mental awakening, and that by means of conquest in other countries than Arabia, the wild Sons of the Desert became aware of other worlds than the oceans of sand in the Arabian continent, other pursuits than the pursuits of war, and other triumphs than the triumphs of brute force. Thus much can, upon the whole, be said, that in the main, education up to a certain point, literature in certain departments, and science in some of its branches, were in the best days of Islām, materially promoted by the mental awakening which it produced.\*

Lastly, it may be mentioned as a remarkable deficiency in the literary enterprises of the Arabs, that Islām,—notwithstanding its long-continued existence, its far-extending conquests, and the high pretensions claimed for it both by its adherents and its apologists,—has never yet given birth to any literary work of which the world demands a translation.† Indeed, but for the inquisitiveness of specialists, even the Qur'ān itself would never have appeared in any other tongue than the one in which it first appeared. In this particular, the literature of Islām cuts a very poor figure beside the literature of other lands, which literature, for the mere sake of its Christian teaching, is being translated into various tongues every year and every day. For this there is a reason. Precisely in so far as individuals have shewn themselves possessed of great speculation and creative genius, they have departed from the rigid orthodoxy demanded by the Qur'ān. It may be inferred, therefore, that the outburst of literary and scientific enthusiasm among Muḥammadans which took place in the eighth century of the Christian era, was due, not directly to the influence of The Religion, but rather to that mental quickening

\* Dods, *Muhammad, Buddha, and Christ*, 110.

† Ibid. 116.

and exultant consciousness of power and widened horizon, which came to the conquering Saracens. That this was the order of sequence in this matter, has been well pointed out. At first their newly-awakened energy found scope in other fields than the field of philosophy.\* But when the din of war died down, the voice of the Muses was heard. 'Marte undique obstrepente, Musis vix erat locus.'† And now, the same fervour that had made the Saracen arms irresistible, was spent in the race for knowledge among the peoples they had subdued. Competition changed its direction. But so far was the religion of Muḥammad from leading men to apply themselves to the highest development of science and philosophy, that it has even been pronounced by a very high authority to be actually incompatible with it. 'Incapable de se transformer et d'admettre aucun élément de vie civile et profane, l'islamisme arracha de son sein tout germe de culture rationnelle.'‡ This is the judgment of so independent a critic as Mons. Rénan, a man who is not committed to Christian interpretations of history, and one of the few authorities qualified by first-hand acquaintance with the subject, to pronounce an opinion upon it.'§

As to the fruits of intellectual energy among Muḥammadans in the various departments of literature it has to be noted that there is a total lack of continuity and development. The literary achievements of which the apologists of Islām boast date many centuries ago. Through the long course of several hundreds of years, no book of permanent value in the domain of scientific knowledge or philosophical enquiry has been written by an Arabian. We note the fact because we believe that mere intellectual pursuit is not the true test that is needed by either party to the controversy. If it is, it is fair to ask,—What has Arabia done—what has Islām done—in these departments

\* Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 116.

† Hunt's Oration *De Antiquitate Linguae Arabum*, quoted by Inchbald, p. 37.

‡ Rénan, *Averroes*, p. iii.

§ Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 117.

during the centuries of the greatest intellectual activity and fruitfulness which have in modern times been passing over us? We are quite willing that the apologists of Islâm should be allowed to choose their own test. The process of final collapse set in long ago. The man who could by the utmost effort of genius (and for such a task he would need all he could muster) shew that there is any real intellectual vitality left in Islâm, *quâ* Islâm, or in Arabia, as having been long its undisputed home, is the man for the present hour. The millions who are now languishing for want of a new sensation, would give divine honours, and a fortune to boot, to the genius who should accomplish this performance. And even should he succeed, it would be all in vain for the purpose of the present enquiry, for it would not prove that the Qur'ân was designed by the Almighty to supersede the New Testament. It would merely prove that the Arabs are a race of people gifted with a certain species of intellectual force,—a fact which has never been denied.

Thus much for the relation of Islâm to intellectual pursuits. We may now turn our attention to its social aspects.

The claim of Muḥammadanism to supersede every other religion, unavoidably commits it to a combative attitude. It challenges investigation and awakens enquiry. More than this; it challenges *comparison* with all other religions before or after it,—not merely with the fetichism that surrounded its cradle, but also with well-attested Christianity and hoary Judaism, the Divine origin of both of which systems Islâm itself assumes as not even requiring to be discussed. Now, the social life of a people is so inseparably bound up in its religion, that it is impossible to touch the one without touching also the other. Tell us what the one is, and we know instinctively what the other is sure to be. This is particularly the case with Muḥammadanism; for the Qur'ân embodies directions of the most detailed character in regard to the social life of those who accept it. In no respect is

this more true than in respect of the relations of master and servant, of husband and wife. Without purposing, therefore, to traverse the whole ground of the social aspects of Qur'anic teaching, we may confine ourselves to these two,—which afford, indeed, the best material for comparison.

The reader is aware that the Qur'ân allows to every man four legally-married wives at a time.\* It is contended by those who believe in the Divine origin of the Qur'ân, that this arrangement is wise, and beneficent, and salutary ; and some of them go so far as to contend that polygamy is preferable to monogamy.† It may be feared that there is only too much truth in the assertion of Dr. Marcus Dods, that so far from the author of the Qur'ân being the Great Supreme Himself, its author 'was an ignorant man,—so ignorant, indeed, that he did not even know his own ignorance.'‡ Whether polygamy, as sanctioned in the Qur'ân, was a blessing to the wild Sons of the Desert who flocked to the standard of Muḥammad, is not so much our present question, as whether it was an advance on the teachings of the New Testament regarding the relations of husband and wife ; and there seems abundant reason for believing that the author of the Qur'ân knew nothing of the best fruits of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If, indeed, he knew nothing more of the genuine fruits of evangelical belief than what he could gather from the specimens of so called Christians whom he met with in Arabia, the fact deprives his opinions on the subject of all value.

All that it seems necessary here to say on this point may be elicited by a couple of simple tests,—First, Does the limitation laid down in the Qur'ân serve to secure abstention from misconduct on the part of those who believe that limitation to carry

\* Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 95, and *Al Koran*. The reader who is interested in the subject of Marriage in Islâm may with profit consult Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, 346—50.

† Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Question whether Islâm has been beneficial or Injurious to Human Society in general and to the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations*, 8, 9.

‡ Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 123.

Divine authority? And second, Does that limitation, when we thus have regard to its practical operation, bear out the belief of the claim of Islam to supersede Christianity?

It is quite usual to urge that Muḥammad designed to place restrictions on licentious indulgence. If this was his purpose, it has been defeated; and the cause of its defeat lies mainly in the conditions with which he surrounded his law of marriage. The law of divorce in Islām is such as to deprive the restrictions of all real meaning; so much so, that in actual practice Muḥammadans find that they can marry as many wives as they like, and yet be acting within the Qur'ānic law,—provided the number of cotemporary wives do not exceed a certain figure. The limitation is, not more than four at one time who can have legal claims upon a man. The pronouncement of the three simple words—in Arabic two—*Ent idlik*, or *Ent idlika*, 'I divorce thee,' or, 'Thou art divorced,' (or any one of a score of other such phrases that may be found in the *Hidāya* or in the Tagore *Law Lectures*), is sufficient to dissolve the tie, and he may now replace her, though she be already but one of four, by another.\* This is done with such rapidity that it is on record that some young men have had as many as twenty and even thirty wives,—a new one every three months.† In so doing, they have not been contravening any law

\* On this painful subject of divorce in Arabia, the student might with profit consult Buckhardt, *Bedouins and Wahdys*, i. 110—15, 270—80, and Crichton, *History of Arabia*, ii. 362—6.

† The case was strikingly illustrated in the very earliest days of The Faith and in the family of The Prophet himself. Hasan, son of Muḥammad's daughter and successor of his father 'Alī in the Khilāfat of Qūfa, was so intent on varying the charms of his ever-changing Harīm, that the Muslim historians relate that he exercised the power of divorce, as a matter of simple caprice, no less than seventy times, —some of them say ninety. The vagrancy of his passions became so notorious as to gain for him the nickname of 'The Divorcer;' for it was only by continual divorces that he could harmonize his craving for new nuptials with the requirements of the Qur'ān which limited his legal wives to four. The leading men of The Faith complained to his father that Hasan was continually marrying their daughters and continually divorcing them. The Khalifa replied that the remedy lay in their own hands, —they should refuse to give him their daughters. These divorced wives of his were



of their religion ; but have, rather, been acting within their legal right, and in the belief that they enjoy in so doing the Divine authority and sanction. Thus does the ease with which divorce can be effected afford all the opportunity which the most licentious could desire, to effect a change of wives as often as caprice dictates. The only restriction placed upon divorce is that the woman can claim (and get if she can) the balance of her dowry (generally a very insignificant sum) and maintenance for three months, at the end of which time she is available for remarriage.\*

irrespective of his concubines and slave-girls, upon the number and variety of whom there was no limit or check whatever. The case of Hasan (who, according to Muslim teaching is sinless, inasmuch as he was a member of The Prophet's family and one of his Successors) forms, as has been well said, the best commentary on the marriage laws of the Qur'ân. Cnf. Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, 418; Osborn, *Lâm under the Arabs*, 92. If Palgrave is to be believed (and what reasonable man ever doubted his testimony?) the state of things at the present time among the strictest of all the strict adherents of The Faith is such as cannot be contemplated without intense pain. Speaking of one of the chiefs of that sect, he says,—‘The personal character of the present Viceroy, Mohammed, has added considerably to the evils of its position (he is referring to Bahrain). This governor is a perfect Sybarite,—marrying on trial, so to say, every fortnight ; while every fortnight sees a new divorce followed by a new marriage ; and all this accompanied by great display, expense, and lavish waste, in pensioning off the old love and purchasing the new ; not to mention the scandalous publicity of these transactions, and a *nec nisi legitimè vult nubere* enough to put Rome and Messalina to the blush !’ Further on he says,—‘In the hands of this worthy, the control (or presidential authority) appears to consist in the exercise of choosing now and then a pretty girl, on whom to bestow the brief honours of matrimony for a fortnight or at the furthest a month, with a retiring pension afterwards. While I was myself at Bedaa’, the uxorious Khaleefah paid a visit to the neighbouring town of Dowlah, and there lightly espoused a fair seamstress of the place,—to be no less lightly divorced long before my return from ‘Omân. No solemnity was spared on the occasion: jurists were consulted, the dowry paid ; public rejoicings were ordered, and public laughter came unbidden ; while Mohammed wasted the hard-earned wealth of Menâmah and Moharrek in the pomp of open vice!’ Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, ii. 214, 233.

\* The sum is technically called *Siddq* (or *Saddq*). One half of it has, generally speaking, to be paid to the woman on the occasion of her marriage, and the other she may claim (and get if she can) in the event of her being divorced. The amount may, therefore, be regarded in the light of what we call ‘security.’ The amount has to be specified in the marriage-contract,—a ‘written document which must be signed by at least two witnesses, else the agreement is void and the marriage not legal—Cnf. Morgan, *Mahometism Explained*, i. 107. This is corroborated by Burckhardt,

If the great reformer was really desirous of securing a purer morality in this matter of marriage, it is, to say the least, strange that he should, for all practical purposes, have left his followers unlimited licence by the peculiarity of his laws of divorce. That the facility of divorce is a fact, and not 'a calumny of the christians,' to use Gibbon's phrase, will be seen when we note that the Muḥammadan is permitted by Islāmic law to cast his wife away without any warning, and without even assigning any reason.\* Against this the husband has no check and the dishonoured woman no redress,—excepting the poor sum called the 'dowry,' or *hivē* as it is called in the too plain language of the Qur'ān.† Thus the remedy was but little better than the disease.

Those who wish us to admire the wisdom of Muḥammad in the limitation of the number of wives to four, forget, moreover, to add that this limitation is further neutralized by the authorization which he gives to unlimited concubinage. It is true that he denounces in clear terms the practice of public misconduct, as 'a foul thing, and an evil way;' but he as clearly allows his followers as many damsels 'as their right hands might get pos-

who says (*Arabia*, i. 402)—'The price paid for virgins, among the respectable classes, varies at Mekka from forty to three hundred dollars, and from ten to twenty dollars among the poorer classes. Half the sum only is usually paid down; the other half is left in possession of the husband, who pays it in case he should divorce his wife.' On the subject of the *Haqqul-bint*, or 'daughter's price,' consult Burckhardt, *Bedouins and Wahābys*, i. 109.

\* Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, 348 (edn. Lond. 1877) and his *Rise and Decline of Islām*, 43-4, in a Series entitled PRESENT DAY TRACTS, published by the Religious Tract Society, about 1881). The facility of divorce under the Islāmic law is so much like that under the Romans, that what is said of the heathen practices of these latter might be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of Muḥammadans. To be convinced of this the reader has only to read a paragraph from Alley's *Vindicię Christianę*, 370-2,—with its important quotations from the Latin historians too long to be inserted here.

† Muir, *The Rise and Decline of Islām*, 44. Cnf. Sale, *Al Koran*, On this subject of what is euphemistically termed the woman's 'dowry,' again, it has to be observed that even this allowance does not owe its origin to Muḥammad. So high an authority as Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, speaking on the subject of the *Customs of the pre-Islāmic Arabs*, says (p. 17) that 'the law of dower was also recognized' among them. See, also, Pitts, *Mahometans*, 38-9.

session of',—in other words, as many as they might feel disposed to purchase in the market, and as many as they could succeed in capturing in war. The Qur'ân declares that fornication is punishable with stripes, and adultery with death; but the punishment is never inflicted. Thus the only limits to license, under this head, again, are a man's inclination and his purse. It has, hence, been well pointed out by so high an authority as Lane, that notwithstanding what Sale and some other learned men have asserted regarding this matter, the Muslim law does certainly not limit the number of concubine-slaves whom a man may have,—whether in addition to or without a wife or wives.\* The Qur'ân affords, in effect, the widest liberty which the libertine could desire. The practical result of the regulations is rather to remove impediments to unlimited licence, and to enable the Muslim libertine (supposing such a person to exist) to contend, Qur'ân in hand, that God authorizes his proceedings. To what an extent the law of the Qur'ân in the matter of temporary marriages and of what for the sake of euphemy, are termed 'slave-girls,' is carried among the followers of Muḥammad, it would be 'a shame even to mention.' The name of 'unbridled licentiousness,' which has been given to their practices, has been bitterly complained of by amateur writers as sounding harsh. If the language of truth was ever yet uttered, it was uttered by the man who first applied those words to the usage of The Faithful in their relations towards that portion of the human family which every true man feels bound to honour. Let one example suffice. The Sultâns of Turkey are the heads of The Faith; and though not, strictly speaking, genuine Khalîfas,† they are practically so, inasmuch as they occupy the office, and hold the authority, and wield the influence, and discharge the functions, temporal and spiritual, of Sovereign Pontiffs in Islâm. It will be remembered that on the occasion of the supposed suicide of a late Sultân, his women who were

\* Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 123.

† Macbride, *Mohammedan Religion Explained*, 70, 88.

floated away from the palace at Constantinople, amounted to as many as fifty boat-loads. We are not told how large the boats were; but this statement, which was recorded in the public journals at the time, will shew to what an extent even the highest dignitaries of The Faith avail themselves, when wealth permits, of the spirit in which 'the Holy Qur'ân' sympathizes with The Faithful,—'Allâh would make it easy for you: and Allâh is gracious and Merciful!'<sup>\*</sup> In all this the Sultân acted within the letter of the Qur'ân; and it would not be surprising to learn that out of this vast number of women, there were not more than four (the orthodox number) who had legal claims upon him. For all practical purposes, the legislative enactments of the Arabian reformer amount to this, that his follower is free to take as many wives as he may wish, and concubines without limit as well.<sup>†</sup>

Thus has the great Arabian reformer made permanent provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. But the facility with which he has thus placed within the reach of The Faithful the means for the easy appeasement of their desires has had an effect<sup>‡</sup> which he doubtless never contemplated. It has resulted that there is probably no community in the whole world so abandoned to promiscuous intercourse as the followers of Muḥammad arḥ, and the very course which he denounced as 'a foul thing, and an evil way,' is the course for which they, more than other men, are notorious.<sup>‡</sup> Those who understand the customs of The Faithful

<sup>\*</sup> Muir, *The Rise and Decline of Islâm*, 36, 51.

<sup>†</sup> The reader who cares to go into the question and its defence from the standpoint of the Muḥammadan apologist, should consult Syed Ameer Ali, *Life of Mohammed*, 240-1; Sédillot, *Histoire Générale Des Arabes*, 85. But the persecuting spirit with which the apologists of Islâm pursue the study, renders it all but hopeless that any good should ever result from the controversy. When such men learn to credit their opponents with as sincere a desire as their own for the ascertainment of historical fact, we shall all breathe more freely in connexion with the great questions that sever Muslim from Christian and Jew.

<sup>‡</sup> The reader who would obtain proof of this is recommended to peruse the invaluable work recently published by Sir William Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, 265,—and, indeed, throughout the work. To the mind of a Christian it is

are aware that they know of practices less likely to entail permanent expense and chronic domestic misery than that of observing the law of the Qur'ân, whether in regard to wives or to slave-girls.\* Experience has shewn that the broader the limits of indulgence are, the more likely are they to be transgressed. The step from a man who keeps a slave-girl for himself to the man who keeps a slave-girl for himself and others, becomes very slight when the passions are concerned ; and the step from one such poor victim to several is if possible slighter still. And thus it may be said with truth that the utterances of the Qur'ân are distinctly responsible for the gross immorality that distinguishes all Muhammadan nations, and which they practice without shame, and apparently without consciousness of wrong-doing. If it be agreed that time is the true test of the value of a reform, the verdict of the long period of thirteen hundred years will surely be accepted as throwing some light on the question : and the verdict from east to west,

difficult to form a conception of anything more revolting than the fiendish grossness of The Faithful in those early ages of Islâm for which Muslims in these degenerate times are wont to sigh.

\* For some very plain facts regarding this point the reader may consult Muir, *The Rise and Decline of Islâm*, 33; also *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, by the reigning Begum of Bhûpâl, 82, 88 (edn. Lond. 1870). The evidence of this lady should go a great way ; for as she is herself a Musalmân and an orthodox follower of The Prophet, it is not in reason to suspect her of undue leaning in favour of Christian views of these matters. After making the pilgrimage of the Holy Places of The Faith, she writes,—‘Women frequently contract as many as ten marriages, and those who have only been married twice are few in number. If a woman sees her husband growing old, or if she happen to admire any one else, she goes to the Shereef (the spiritual and civil head of the holy city); and after having settled the matter with him, she puts away her husband, and takes to herself another who is perhaps young, good-looking, and rich. In this way, a marriage seldom lasts more than a year or two.’ What Her Highness thus tells us of women *divorcing their husbands* is, of course, entirely *ultra vires*, as Sir William Muir has pointed out, and shews how the laxity of conjugal relations allowed to the male sex has extended itself to the female also,—and that, in a city where, if anywhere, we should have expected to find the law observed. To dispute the truthfulness of Her Highness’s representation, would be absurd. Even if it be granted that the reformer raised in some measure the condition of women among the Arabs, we need only glance at the accounts given of Turkish harîms, to feel convinced that Khudaija, ‘Âisha, and Fâtima, have not been reproduced, nor even imitated, by the later daughters of The Faith.

and from north to south, wherever the Faith of Muḥammad has spread, and irrespective of considerations of climate or nationality, is uniform,—that whatever may have been the intentions of the great reformer, the restrictions and regulations he laid down in regard to the intercourse of the sexes have operated most disastrously for his claims as the authorized supercessor of Jesus of Nazareth. That believers in Muḥammad are less licentious than believers in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is a point which hardly admits of discussion. It would be more to the purpose to inquire whether the followers of Muḥammad would have been less or more licentious than they are if the great Arabian had followed the example of the Old and New Testaments in their comparative silence regarding the exact allowance of wives. The case well shews that restriction is not the sure road to restraint, and that there are some things for which restriction is not the most effectual cure. By a broad induction embracing all mankind, and all the ages back to the days of happy Eden, it is proved that restriction presents a direct appeal to opposition, and that those who are the most stringently bounded are those who are the most likely to prove restive and to overleap their bounds. It is clearly shewn that such of the followers of Muḥammad as can be considered ‘moral’ persons, owe their morality to their particular physical tone and natural bent; and that the Qur’ān, when men give themselves up to its unrestricted direction, has the unfortunate effect of affording to the licentious unlimited licence. The assertion, therefore, so often made, that by the restrictions he placed on polygamy, Muḥammad did a great deal towards improving the condition of the feebler sex, is erroneous.\*

It is quite curious to note the shifts to which the apologists of Islām have recourse in order to make out their case. How they succeed in keeping clear of the real point in their efforts to make out a case for polygamy, divorce, and concubinage, is a

\* Osborn, *Islām und die Araber*, 91

psychological phenomenon that could scarcely be credited excepting by those who have made the matter a study. The arguments put forward by Sayyid Aḥmad Khān on this subject of polygamy are so far past endurance that the reader must see the Sayyid's book for himself. We cannot wound the feelings of readers by transcribing his words, and our only apology for thus hinting at his mode of handling the subject is that, in point of eminence, he stands first among Muḥammadans who have ventured to clothe their defence of this odious practice in the Queen's English. His argument, all through, is based upon considerations which have regard only to the male portion of mankind; that the female portion has any claim to an equal share of consideration in such a matter is a conception which from all that appears had not, at the time he wrote, risen upon his mental horizon: at any rate, if it had, he has carefully refrained from embodying it in his book. The learned Maulvī should not conclude, as we fear he is disposed to do, that the reason why Christian writers do not attempt confutation of his statements on this revolting subject is that his facts are incontrovertable or his reasoning sound. If the Maulvī had been blessed with a Christian training, he never could have marred his pages as he has done. The point to ascertain is whether the so-called restrictions placed by Muḥammad on the number of cotemporary marriages which a Believer is at liberty legally to contract, has had an improving effect upon the morals of his followers. The arguments put forward in commendation of his restrictions are for the most part too abstract and general to admit of analysis or refutation,—they deal with the subject unpractically. The fact is that no nation which acknowledges that religion has any voice at all in such a matter, is so abandoned to licentious practices as are the followers of Muḥammad. The 'restrictions,' so loudly boasted of by the apologists by Islām, are among the things that 'look well on paper',—and there the goodness of the whole matter ends.

We can fairly say that in all our reading of books old and

new, we have not seen an argument on either of these subjects that could be deemed a successful refutation of the objection raised to them by the advocate of Christianity. The most original, perhaps, of all the arguments ever put forward is one that we find in a work of the learned Muḥammadan doctor already so frequently named in the course of our work. He assures his readers that 'it is a great mistake to suppose that by Islām polygamy is made compulsory upon its followers.'\* Did the writer imagine that he would advance his own reputation as a man assured of the goodness of his cause, by thus insinuating an argument which no one ever used? Further, the argument so frequently put forward that Muḥammadans, as a rule, have not more than one wife, does not touch the point.† If it proves anything, it proves what we have just contended,—that some Muḥammadans are better than their creed. Most of them, again, keep to monogamy by reason of poverty.‡ In using such an argument, it is evident that the apologists of Islām have a sort of sneaking notion that monogamy is the better practice. The half-ashamed way in which polygamy is defended shews that it is difficult to discover presentable arguments for it in the strong light of this late century.§ The whole difficulty of the apologists arises from their continuing to maintain that Muḥammad's words were the

\* Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Benefits of Islām to Human Society*, 7-8.

† Syed Amcer Ali, *Life of Mohammed*, 246.

‡ On this point the reader should consult Pitts, *Mahometans*, 39. Though this writer makes no attempt to conceal his aversion as to the religious practices of The Faithful, there is no reason to believe him to be careless as to matters of fact. His solicitude to be truthful and just is a very noticeable feature in his quaint little book.

§ As an instance we may mention that the Honourable Mr. Sayyid Amr Ali informs us (*Life of Mohammed*, 227, 246) that in India 'ninety-five moslems out of every hundred are perfect monogamists,' and that 'plurality of wives has come to be regarded as an evil and as something opposed to the teaching of the Prophet'! Elsewhere (*id.* 223) this learned writer assures us that 'the greatest and most reprehensible mistake committed by Christian writers is to suppose that Mohammed either adopted or legalized polygamy',—an opinion than which 'no belief could be more false.' To ordinary minds the possession of four wives at a time comes within the definition of 'polygamy'; and this Muḥammad did certainly legalize.



words of God. It is contended that he spoke as an Oriental to Orientals: if this means anything, it means that Islâm was never intended for persons in cooler latitudes; which is the same thing as saying plainly that the Qur'ân is false,—for that book lays down rules for all lands, for all conditions, and for all time. Islâm, in that case, is fitted for none but eastern nations, sunk in a condition of barbarism, as were the savage tribes of the Desert in which Islâm was born. The improvement and elevation of eastern peoples from their degraded condition is, in that case, placed by the fiat of the Almighty beyond the range of possibility, and what is a sin in one part of God's dominion is no sin in another a few days' journey off. It has been well said by Dr. Marcus Dods, that what were restrictions to the Arabs who joined themselves to Muḥammad would be license to other men. The accommodations to a rude and untaught tribe which are judicious, seasonable, and helpful, as a temporary expedient, are an insufferable offence to morality when proclaimed as the ultimate law of conscience.\*

It is somewhat strange, we confess, that in all the apologies put forward in vindication of the teachings of the Qur'ân regarding this unpleasant subject, no attempt is ever made to deal with the question of the extra allowance of wives whom the reformer appropriated to himself. It surely is not unreasonable to expect that the man who undertakes a reform should himself not act in direct disregard of the practices which he has advocated.† It would hardly do to urge that Muḥammad, being an

\* Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 122.

† A noteworthy instance in proof of this occurred in connexion with the late Keshab Chandra Sen, the excellent founder of what is known to all the world as 'the Brahma Samâj of India.' His permitting his young daughter to be betrothed to the Râjâ of Kuch Bihâr was held to amount practically to a relinquishment of what was held to be one of the distinctive tenets of his reform in reference to child-marriage. The arrangement was generally attributed to the temptation arising out of the consideration of the great wealth of the Râjâ; and no explanation put forward by the excellent Bâbû served to prevent the dissatisfaction that spread with great rapidity among his followers, and even the defection of some of them. Into the

Oriental, could not help himself; and that his eleven wives\* were a necessity of the climate, or of his peculiar nature, or that this allowance was asceticism itself when contrasted with the practices of other eastern potentates;† for the same arguments might be urged by his followers. It is generally thought sufficient to contend that being, as he was, the prophet and favourite of the Most High, he enjoyed peculiar privileges and allowances in this matter.‡ We have even heard it contended that he had neither will nor choice in the matter, owing to the fact that in taking so many wives beyond what his own law allowed, the helpless man was merely acting in obedience to the express requirement of the Great Supreme.§ Such pretensions carry their own condemnation, and can deceive no one.

It is usual to commend Muḥammad for having rendered marriage 'sacred.' It sounds well to put it so: but is it true? What does the Christian mind say to the 'sacredness' of marriage in which an unlimited number of concubines also may be sharers of a man's attentions and possibly of his affections too? or what does that mind say to the 'sacredness' of a marriage tie which, with a facility almost incredible, may, without legal process, be severed at any moment when groundless jealousy, or puerile caprice or bad temper may gain a transient ascendancy over the utterances

merits of the case we have no intention of entering: the Bâbî was a man whom it was impossible to know without feeling that he was a suitable object for respect and love: we allude to the case merely to shew that the hubbub which in his case threatened at the time to become so dangerous to his reputation and usefulness, aptly illustrates the principle noted in the text.

\* The number is differently stated by different writers. The Muslim traditionists vary in their statements from nine to thirty. The number given in the text is the number made out by Sir William Muir. The curious reader may consult on this subject an Article entitled 'The Wives of Muḥammad' in the *Indian Antiquary* (Bombay Monthly) for March 1878.

† All these arguments have, in fact, been used *ad nauseam*.

‡ Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 95, 97.

§ The learned Dr. Aloys Sprenger has (*Life of Mohammad*, 153-4) some remarks on the subject of Muḥammad's relations with the gentle sex, which may help the reader to form an opinion of his own regarding it.

of a man's lips, and leave the thing he called by the hallowed name of 'wife' helpless and hopeless on the streets?\*

We prefer, then, to say that Muḥammad rendered marriage 'inviolable.' The only advantage was that his 'regulations conferred certain exclusive rights on marriage, and secured men from violation of those rights; and one of these was that he forbade his followers access to each other's wives.† This was good; but it was nothing new or unknown to the followers of Christ or of Moses,—nor even to the wild Sons of the Desert. He merely declared inviolable those rights which Nature herself had declared inviolable from the beginning, and which it did not need the ponderous apparatus of a Divine revelation to re-assert. However important it may have been to enforce rights which the coarse violence of many of the lawless Arabs had for many ages disregarded, the whole world did not need to be reminded of those rights. But as happens in the case of some other points of Muḥammad's reforms, there was nothing new in this, even to the Arabs. But the terms in which he stated the inviolability of a man's conjugal relationships, and the conditions and possibilities with which he hampered those relationships, deprive them of all moral significance. Those terms are framed in consideration of the capricious inclinations of the man, and not of the feelings and dignity of the woman; and they bear the impress of a time-serving reformer, and not of one who thought only of moral purity. The author of the Qur'ân has rendered it impossible to regard the marriage of Muḥammadans as 'sacred' in the sense in which the believer in Moses or in Jesus has learned to regard it so.

\* Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, 457.

† It is but consistent with mere fact to observe that even this restriction was not promulgated by Muḥammad till after he had been smitten with the charms of another man's wife whom he soon transferred to his own harem. We refer to the case of Zainab, wife of Zaid ibnî Hârith, who was at once divorced from her lawful husband for the sake of The Prophet,—that divorce being sanctioned, as Muḥammad assured his followers, by a special revelation from the Supreme Being. The case taught him, in his own experience, the possible evils of men's catching sight of each other's wives. The 'revelation' was after the event.

We come now to the second point,—Is the claim of Islām to be the authorized supercessor of Christianity sustained by the marriage policy of Muḥammad, when regard is had to the practical working of that policy? • It will be admitted that supercession, in the case of successive religious Dispensations, connotes superiority. Is it admissible, on moral or logical grounds, that polygamy as practised among Muḥammadans is a better thing than monogamy as practised among Christians? Now, with polygamy as practised in Islām it is necessary to associate the idea of forced marriage; that is to say, of marriage with or without the consent of the female, without personal acquaintance between the parties, and generally speaking, while the female is yet a child: in other words, marriage among Muḥammadans is, even at its best, a *mariage de convenance*,—without affection and even without courtship.\* It is argued in defence of the marriage of all females, nill they will they, that it secures that every female shall have a protector. Now, the importance of every woman having a protector will be doubted by no one; but the plea of the apologists overlooks some considerations that are of essential importance—Is it right that the woman should have no voice in the decision of a matter fraught, to her, with such consequences and such perils? Does it necessarily follow that the husband who is not bound to his wife by any tie of true affection, will be a protector at all? Does not the facility of divorce associate, even with protection, an element of insecurity that might render the life of a woman so protected unspeakably more desolate than

\* The idea of *courtship*, in the sense in which it has come to be regarded by communities that have become permeated by the influence of Christianity, is to the Muslim mind ridiculous. That the gradual growth of mutual affection, based upon acquaintanceship and choice, should be held to be a necessary precursor of marriage, is unhappily to the fellower of Muḥammad, a thing unknown. Mr. Stanley Lane Poole, in his recent edition of Lane's *Selections from the Kur-an* (Introd. p. lxxi) tells us that 'the system of Muḥammad certainly does its best to make marriage from love impossible.' It is only fair to add that Mr. Poole is far from insensible to the good points of The Faith. If Muslims find him a damaging apologist, it is the subject that is to blame, not he.

if she were unmarried? The man who practises polyamy is not by any means necessarily the protector of his wives; he is often the exact reverse. There might be some motive for him to fulfil the office of protector, if divorce were impossible, or even if it were difficult. But the woman who may in a moment of fickle temper be turned on to the streets,—rejected by her husband, discarded by her former and natural relations,—can scarcely be supposed to know the feeling of safety, and can hardly realize that she has a protector at all. To us, therefore, it appears that the argument about protectorship is a subterfuge and an unreality. Polygamy appears to us to contemplate the case of the male, not that of the female. The miseries that a woman may experience in consequence of being a cotemporary wife, it would scarcely be just to lay at her door, for she had no voice in the disposal of her own lot in life. Whether polygamy be contrary to the ideas of the woman, is a view of the case which to the Muslim mind borders on the grotesque. The fate that made her a woman deprived her of the right of the choice. The whole argument about protectorship is so ludicrously untrue, that it is a miracle that any one who has witnessed the degraded condition of the generality of Muḥammadan women could be deceived into using it. Yet this argument is seriously used to shew that Muslim polygamy is an advance on Christian monogamy.

It has been argued that the married life of Muḥammadan women is often a happy one, even though the marriage was not negotiated on the ground of affection,—the parties having never so much as seen each other till the tie had been secured by force of law. This, again, is ‘a man of straw;’ for it has never been asserted that Muḥammadan marriages are necessarily and in every instance unhappy ones. But as long as the seclusion of women continues among Muḥammadans, it will be as impossible to prove the point as to deny it. The question, therefore, of the comparative happiness of Muḥammadan and Christian women becomes one of probabilities. And whether such a method of

deciding a woman's fate for life as that which is practised among Muḥammadans would be felt to be a degradation by any one instructed in the laws of Christ, is a question that needs no answer. The question of married 'happiness,' in the sense in which Christian civilization has taught people to understand it, is one that does not enter into the case of a Muḥammadan. The woman certainly has every motive for sinking her own individuality in her attentions to her husband, for she has all through her married life hanging over her the possibility of that fatal sentence of divorce. With such an abiding source of unrest, it is hardly to be wondered at that she does all in her power to contribute to his 'happiness.' And so far as her own happiness is bound up in his, she is happy if he is. But Christian women will hardly think of it as a happiness that knows no fear, but rather as the happiness of the servile and the obsequious. However exemplary and devoted her conduct may be, she may at any moment of her husband's caprice be forced to quit her home and her children, and know that her place is occupied by some younger and more favoured stranger; for some Muḥammadans make a habit of continually changing their wives.\* Of course, there is but little danger of this if the man be of a sedate or patient turn of mind, averse to change: but what if it be otherwise? What if he be thoughtless, passionate, hasty, capricious, selfish,—all of which infirmities it is the natural tendency of the life of boys in the East to produce and to foster. Even mothers pander to their boys, and succumb to all their whims; and while yet they are boys they find themselves husbands: what kind of husbands are such boys likely to make? Let women whose training has been imbued with the spirit of Christian teaching, judge of the nature of the 'happiness' that is likely to fall to the lot of women under the law of Islām.

But the apologists of Islām never appear aware of the vanity of arguing as if 'two blacks made a white.' They contend that

\* Stobart, *Islām and its Founder*, 152; Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 329.

at some periods the practice of Muḥammadans has been at least as favourable to good morals as the practice of nominal Christians. Even Mr. Bosworth Smith takes Christianity at a period when the Papal heresy had done its worst with it, and then asks if Muḥammadanism is not better than *that* !\* Now, the force of this contention vanishes when it is remembered that in the judgments of the only persons whom it is designed to convince, a good Muḥammadan is better than a bad Christian,—that a Muḥammadan who holds his religion intelligently and follows it faithfully, is an incomparably better person in all that makes a man, than one who by the mere accident of nationality is doomed against his will to be called ‘a Christian.’ A man who disavows the claim of Christ to govern his life, and does not hesitate to avow his disbelief in the Bible and the Day of Judgment, is scarcely a man whom an honest controversialist would accept as a criterion of the value of the Christian religion. What, indeed, is meant by applying the holy name of Christ to such a man? Those apologists further announce the very original sentiment that a Muḥammadan Sultān whose ḥarīm is an indulgence allowed him by the religion of his country, is less guilty than the Christian prince who assumes to himself the same license in defiance of the religion of his.† Was there ever an advocate of Christianity who stood in need of being convinced of such an obvious truth? The point which the apologists of Islām should exercise them-

\* Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 211. We should here observe that nothing is more common than for writers of this school to speak of Christianity and Popery as if they were one and the same thing; and when they do so, it is always for the purpose of shewing that Muḥammadanism compares favourably with Christianity. To saddle upon a system of religion the defects of one of the sections of its professors, is clearly a course than which nothing could be more irrational. The Honourable Mr. Sayyid Amīr ‘Alī, throughout his learned volume, uniformly places to the credit of ‘Christianity’ the vices and the cruelties of the Romish religion, as also its antipathy to scientific research and general intellectual advancement. Even so philosophical a writer as the late Emanuel Deutsch falls into the same error:—See his Article in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 254, p. 315.

† The *North British Review* for August 1855, p. 461.

selves to establish is that the allowance by law and by religion of polygamy at all, is *not* an evil of enormous portent to the social and moral well-being of a community ; but that, on the contrary, it is a distinct advance upon the pure laws of Christ.

It has been well pointed out that this is one of the cases in which the first step is everything. The extent to which polygamy is carried,—whether a man has four wives or four thousand,—is a question of but secondary import.\* The vice is in having more wives than one,—in practising polygamy at all. The point to note is that in the case of Muḥammadanism, polygamy has the consecration of religious ordinance and divine law ; while among so-called ‘Christians’ it is, to any extent whatever, contrary to divine law, and entails the Divine displeasure. A Christian who practises polygamy proclaims himself an ‘infidel ;’ a Muḥammadan who practises it is acting the part of a ‘true believer.’ A profligacy which, however general, is still known to be against law and religion, degrades only those who are guilty of it ; a licensed polygamy at once degrades the whole female sex,—virtuous as well as vicious. Muḥammad did certainly fence in, as far as he dared to do so, the rights of women with a certain amount of legal protection ; but however much this may be done, the woman, after all, who shares her husband with others is no longer an equal companion, like the Christian or even the old Roman wife. She becomes at once an inferior being, a creature created merely for the man’s pleasure, with no complete reciprocal obligation on his side : in a word, she becomes a slave. The connexion is not a mutual contract on equal terms : she belongs to him ; he does not belong to her. He has property in his wife ; his wife has no property in him. Being, then, not his partner, but merely an article of property, she is, like any other article of property, no longer to be trusted, but guarded. Her attractions must be sedulously kept out sight of all but him who is the master of them, for in them alone consists her value to him

\* Freeman, *History of the Saracens*, 56.



as an article of property. She has, consequently to be secured with bolts and bars. And thus is polygamy to blame for the seclusion of women in the East. Even the seclusion of Hindû women owes its origin to the necessity laid upon the Hindûs when India passed under Muslim domination. The Christian law of monogamy,—making, as it does, the wife the equal of the husband, and giving her as much right in him as he has in her, —renders it as impossible for a man to impose upon his wife the obligation of seclusion, as for his wife to impose it upon him. She is no longer a servant, but a friend; and their interests, unlike the interests of master and servant, are bound to be identical. We should add that though it thus appear that polygamy entails the seclusion of women, it does not by any means follow that the reverse statement would be true—namely, that seclusion implies polygamy. It has been well pointed out that ancient Greece, with the exception of Sparta, was a curious example of a country, legally monogamous, where the seclusion of all virtuous women was almost as strict as in polygamous ones. But there is no allusion to any such practice in Homer,—a fact which might corroborate the opinion that the seclusion of women in Greece was merely one out of many abuses (some of them worse than this) which crept into Greece after the Ionian migration had brought about a connexion with Asia.\*

It is generally thought sufficient to meet the argument against Muslim polygamy by citing the practices of the Jews in Old-Testament times; and the citation is supposed to be sufficient to administer to the advocate of Christianity his *quietus*, by demonstrating that the custom has Divine authority.† But it has been well pointed out that under the law of Moses the vice was but tolerated; while under the system of Muḥammad it is established as a Divine ordinance for The Faithful. It is

\* The *North British Review* (Aug. 1855) 462.

† Sale, *Prel. Di c.* 95; Maimonides, *Haluchoth Ishoth*, cap. 14; Selden, *Uxor Hebraica*, lib. i, cap. 9.

true that while Muḥammad placed definite limitations on the practice of polygamy, Moses placed none : but this, so far from proving that Islām is an advance on Judaism, proves the exact reverse ; for whereas, by placing no limitations, the Mosaic system left the way clear for its ultimate abolition, the Qur'ān constitutes it a Divinely-sanctioned condition of life to the end of time. The law of Moses was never intended for a permanency ; Muḥammadanism is. The system of Moses admitted of modification and reform ; Muḥammadanism admits of none. Every part of the Mosaic system had a forward look, and was designed to leave the mind in an attitude of suspense and expectation. 'A prophet,' said Moses, 'shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me : him shall ye hear.' In the meantime, allowances were made for the weakness and immaturity of the people, and accommodations made to them which were abolished when they attained the fullness of the time. Mosaism must, therefore, be judged according to its own claims,—*viz.* as a temporary and local religion, as the mere pedagogue servant, leading to the teacher, but not itself uttering the final truth. Thus is the Divine wisdom manifested in the Mosaic law,—disclaiming, as it emphatically does, both finality and completeness. But Islām claims to be complete, final, and universal. It must therefore be judged for what it professes to be. And professing, as it does, to have been charged by God with the mission of superseding not Judaism only, but also Christianity, it must be condemned by every point in which we find it a retrogression and not an advance upon our own religion, inasmuch as Christianity also professes to be final. And the conclusion in reference to the regulations of Muḥammad as regards the relations of the sexes is that by making those regulations final, he has prevented further progress and conferred on immorality a character of permanent consecration.\*

\* Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 121 ; Stephens, *Christianity and Islām*, 156.

This conclusion raises a series of questions of most grave import to all the followers of Muḥammad. Did he really perceive the antagonism which he thus established between his own religion and the religion which it was intended to supersede? Did he intend the depreciation of monogamy? Did he foresee the evils of his own regulations? Did his regulations owe their conception in the first instance to a desire to suppress immorality among his followers, or to a desire to guarantee to them, in one way and another, unlimited license? These appear to be questions which need the serious consideration of those who accept Muḥammad at his own appraisal. All those who acknowledge the Divine authorship of the Qur'ān, and who hold Muḥammad to be a true prophet of God, must admit that polygamy and unlimited concubinage enjoy the Divine approval, being actually sanctioned and prescribed by the Almighty. If the Divine Being designed by such regulations to suppress immorality it does appear to us that He ought by this time to be convinced of His defeat. If the regulations are not His, then it follows that the author of the Qur'ān was man and not God; which is the same thing as saying that Muḥammad was, whether wittingly or otherwise, a deceiver of himself and of all his followers. There is no evidence in the Qur'ān, that its author ever as much as perceived the evils of polygamy and concubinage: there is, on the contrary, plenty of evidence both in his book and in his own life, that he was distinctly assured that these practices were benefits. He raised no protest against them, he sanctioned them, he praised them, he practised them,—and in the case of polygamy, even far beyond the limits which his own law allowed. He clearly was not solicitous for the abolition of polygamy; and though the limitations he placed upon it were not intended to apply to his own case, yet they served, in an unmeaning shilly-shally sort of way, to restrict the evil in the case of his immediate followers. The limitations which Muḥammad thus placed on the number of wives, were undoubtedly an advance upon the

unrestrained intercourse into which through long ages of barbarism, the Arabs had sunk: but were those limitations an advance upon the law of Christ? This, we submit, is the point which the apologists of Islâm have to make.

But no amount of evidence, in a case of this nature, will obtain acknowledgment of defeat from a man who has previously made up his mind that the case of his opponent is wrong; and thus, as a last resort, recourse is had to the authority of Milton.\* It would scarcely be possible for the advocate of Muslim polygamy and divorce to cite a more unfortunate case. In citing this case, the position of Milton is apt to be misunderstood. He doubted whether the utterances of the Bible on the points mentioned were sufficiently distinct to justify the condition of the law of England on the point; and his opposition brought him into conflict with the moral sense of civilized humanity. He cannot be regarded as an independent witness, for he was a man with a grievance. It may be doubted, judging from all that is known of him, whether he would have accepted a brief for the side he took, if he had not been goaded to it by a life sorrow; and it may be accepted as absolutely certain, that he would not have advocated the substitution of the laws of Islâm regarding the intercourse of the sexes, for those laws of which he complained. A man who learns in a bitter school to become prepossessed in favour of a certain view, can hardly be regarded as a disinterested or dispassionate witness. No one could consent to the opinion of such a one being made a guide for all mankind. Besides, the polygamy and divorce for which Milton pleaded are quite different things from the things allowed by Muḥammad under these names. The reasons which Milton cites from the words of Moses are not as much as hinted at by Muḥammad. Polygamy and divorce were clearly, in the case of Moses, intended to be escapes from misery; but in the case of Muḥammad, they are nothing more than instruments for what Christians understand by licentiousness.

\* Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Benefits of Islâm to Human Society*, 13.

*Without* the causes and grievances mentioned by Moses and by Milton, the follower of Muḥammad acts within his right in seeking those gratifications which Moses never sanctioned, and which Milton never sought. We submit, then, that the citation of the authority of Milton in defence of polygamy and divorce as they exist among the followers of Muḥammad, is beside the mark.

And what during the past twelve centuries has been the value to the cause of morality of the reforms introduced by Muḥammad regarding this whole matter? No real limit, as we have seen, is placed on the intercourse of the sexes. And the very limitations and restrictions so continually dinned into our ears, so far from raising the Muḥammadan population to a higher platform than that occupied by believers in Jesus, have led to license,—and a license aggravated by the support of the Divine sanction. The effect of the innovations he introduced has simply been to favour the inclinations and convenience of the male portion of his followers. Another sad result has been that Muḥammadans have learned to call things by other than their right names, and what the Christian would call license, the Muslim calls restriction.

But in the midst of the contention it is not unusual to overlook one class of persons who if they are not gainers by the alterations established by Muḥammad, are certainly losers in no small degree. All the pleas put forward in vindication of Muḥammad's law of marriage and divorce go on the supposition that there is only one party who needs to be considered,—namely, the man: the woman is passed over as if she had no voice in the matter; no natural rights, no moral sentiment: the party chiefly concerned is left out of court. On several occasions up to this point we have had to note how the Qur'ānic law affects the case of the weaker part of the population, and we have seen how they are hopelessly handed over by the new religion to early marriage, to forced union with husbands they have never seen, to sudden and unexpected expulsion from the enjoyments and rights of

home, and to permanent seclusion from all those delights which can only be shared by those who are allowed free and unfettered intercourse with the outer world. Women, in fact, are regarded in the Qur'an as not possessed of any rights which they can really call their own: their homes, their husbands, even their offspring, they cannot call their own. There doubtless is here and there a Muḥammadan woman to whom 'the lines have fallen in pleasant places, and who has a goodly heritage:' but no thanks to the law of Islām for this. As long as that law remains, it is not easy to see how any man who is concerned to possess sound opinions, could contend that the position of Christian women might as a general rule be advantageously exchanged with their poor degraded Muslim sisters. It is, indeed, quite striking to observe how all the restrictions and all the relaxations introduced by Muḥammad are such as declare that the real elevation of the weaker sex was not the thing he had in view. The only benefit which accrued to women from those reforms which we are expected so much to admire is the paltry sum magniloquently called the 'dowry,' and maintenancè for three months.\* It would not be surprising to learn that the same heartless cowardice that could lead a bad-hearted man to avail himself for selfish purposes of the facility of divorce which the law allows, should also lead him to refuse even this paltry allowance. This is, in effect, corroborated by Mr. Hughes, than whom few non-Muslims writers are more entitled to a respectful hearing. He says that 'the difficulty of restoring the dowry is avoided by compelling the poor woman, through harsh treatment, to herself sue for a divorce,—in which case she can claim nothing!'+ 'Wives' says Niebuhr, 'are entitled to demand a divorce, if they can to do so, when they consider themselves ill used by their husbands.'‡ The surest preservative,

\* Sale, *Prel Disc.* 96. The reader who would learn how the apologists of Islām make out their case regarding this subject should consult Syed Ameer Ali, *Life of Mohammedi*, 240, and those European writers whose authority he there accepts.

† Hughes, *Notes on Muhammadanism*, 122. Cnf. p. 254 of the present work.

‡ Niebuhr, *Travels in Arabia*, ii. 214; Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 329.

therefore, of the marriage bond is a man's own avarice; for if the divorce be at *his* instigation, his wife can claim her 'dowry.'\* With this poor exception, the reforms which 'broad-minded' Christians are supposed to admire, affected women in no other way than to degrade them still more than they had been degraded before, and to seal their degradation by Divine authority. To shew that we are not alone in this opinion, we may cite the deliberate judgment of one who is more familiar with the subject than any authority of our time. Sir William Muir does not hesitate to record his opinion that 'under the preexisting institutions of Arabia, woman possessed more freedom and exercised more legitimate influence' than under the law of the Qur'ân.† And as if to complete the proof of the self-defeating quality of the reforms of Muḥammad, even divorce itself, which is applauded as a happy escape for the husband from a bondage he has grown averse to, becomes at length by the law of the Qur'ân as much a source of bitterness to him as to her whom he puts away. Should he wish to have her back again after the third time of divorcing her, the arrangement is hampered by a condition so disgusting in itself, so shameful and dishonouring to the poor outcast, and involving at the same time an exposure so calculated to make the man look ridiculous and contemptible, that in none but an extreme case would the man consent to being the victim of such a series of humiliating circumstances.‡ It is possible that Muḥammad, knowing how abhorrent it is to the Oriental that his wife should even be *seen* by another man, supposed that by issuing this enactment he was availing himself of

\* The reader who would follow up this point should consult Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie*, 62—6; Russel, *History of Aleppo*, vol. i, ch. 6; Labat, *Mémoires du Chevalier d'Arvieux*, iii. 311; Mills, *History of Muhammadanism*, 469; Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey*, 342; Dallaway, *History of Constantinople*, 32.

† Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, iii. 305; and *The Rise and Decline of Islâm*, 44.

‡ Sale, *Prel. Disc.* 95; and *Al Koran*, 27; Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, iii. 306. See, also, Selden, *Uxor Hebraica*, lib. ii, cap. 21; Ricaut, *State of the Ottoman Empire*, lib. ii, cap. 21.

the strongest possible deterrent from divorce: if he did, he miscalculated the effect of his own law,—which has, in point of fact, been to degrade Muslim women to a deplorable extent.\* From this odious custom, originated by The Prophet of God, has sprung the Arabian proverb,—‘A thousand lovers rather than one Mostahel,’†—a proverb Burckhardt’s brief note on which should be a caution to all apologists of this ill-advised law.‡ This revolting and most monstrous custom is part of the code of law throughout the Turkish empire, and is one of the fragments of Muḥammadanism which has been retained even by the Druzes.§ Upon the whole, we know of no sounder dictum in connexion with this subject than that of a writer just quoted,—‘It would be a gratuitous dishonour to Christian marriage, to compare it with marriage under the law of the Qur’ān.’||

We suppose it will be accepted as a general principle, that the effect of a religion upon the female portion of those who adopt it, may be regarded as a fair criterion of its excellence, and that no religion which when allowed free and unrestricted authority in social affairs, distinctly tends to the degradation of women, can lay claim to a Divine origin.¶ Now, the account we have given of the bearing of the policy of Islām on the gentler sex may seem too strongly coloured; yet on no subject, that we know of, is there a more general consensus of opinion among

\* Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 230.

† Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs*, p. 25 (No. 79).

‡ Dods, *Mohammed, Budilka, and Christ*, 63. It is sad to note that notwithstanding the testimony of writers of such high repute as Lane and Burckhardt,—men whose very names are guarantees for disinterestedness and high-mindedness that are altogether above suspicion,—the Honourable Mr. Sayyid Amīr ‘Alī (*Life of Mohammed*, 247) sees in the aversion of Christian writers to what Sir William Muir calls this ‘disgusting ordeal,’ nothing more than a mere ‘dislike for Mohammed’!

§ Cnf. Taylor, *History of Mohammedanism*, 279.

|| Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, iii. 306.

¶ On this point the reader should consult a very learned and valuable Article in the *Christian Remembrancer*, for Jan. 1855,—often cited in the course of these pages.



the accepted authorities than on this,—that the condition of women in Arabia, judged of in the light of modern civilization, was even better in the so-called 'Times of Ignorance' than since the prevalence of The Faith there.\* We confess to a feeling of considerable reluctance to adopting such a view, for if it is a sound one, it must appear even to the follower of Muḥammad to be fatal to the claim of Islām to be the Divinely-appointed supercessor of the religion of Jesus: yet the authorities are so weighty that to ignore them would be simply foolish. The subject is so important in its connexion with the argument of the present work, that we venture to bespeak the forbearance of the reader while we cite the statements of the authorities referred to.

One of the most sympathetic and unprejudiced writers on the subject of Islām is Mr. Stanley Lane Poole, already several times quoted. In regard to the subject now under review he says, speaking of the poetry of the pre-Islāmite Arabs,† that many writers have drawn a gloomy picture of the condition of women in Arabia before the coming of Muḥammad, and there is no doubt that in many cases their lot was a miserable one. There are ancient Arabic proverbs which point to the contempt in which woman's judgment and character were held by the Arabs of those pagan times, and The Prophet must have derived his mean opinion of women from a too general impression among his countrymen. If this be so, it does not say much for the inspiration and infallibility of Muḥammad, or for the Divine authority of the books in which his opinion of the gentle sex is promulgated.

\* As to the condition of women in Arabia in the present day, the reader may easily disillusionize his mind as to the namby-pamby notions which are frequently found in the pages of writers of the dilettante sort by studying the pages of Burckhardt,—especially his work on the *Bedouins and Wahābys*. The fidelity of the picture of Arab life and manners drawn by this accurate and scholarly traveller has never been impugned.

† Lane, *Selections from the Kur-ān*, Introd. p. xxvi. We should here acknowledge our indebtedness to the learned author of that INTRODUCTION for much of what will be found in the few pages which here follow.

The marriage tie was certainly very loose among the ancient Arabs. The ceremony itself was of the briefest. The man said *Khitb* ('I am an asker in marriage'); and the giver away answered *Nikkh* ('I am a giver in marriage'); and thus the knot was tied,—only to be undone with equal facility and brevity. The frequency of divorce among the Arabs does not speak well for their constancy of affection or their settledness of character, and must have had a degrading effect upon the women. From these facts it has been argued by some that women were the objects of contempt, rather than of respect, among the Arabs of the time before Muḥammad.

There is, however, reason to believe that the evidence upon which this conclusion is founded is partial and one-sided. It is important to distinguish in our judgments, between the Arab of the Desert and the Arab of the town, between whom, in respect of the matter under consideration, there was a wide gulf. It is not impossible that the view commonly entertained as to the condition of Arabian women in the pre-Islâmite times, is based mainly on what Muḥammad saw around him in Makka, and not on the ordinary life of the Desert. To such a conjecture a curiously uniform support is lent by the ancient poetry of the Desert: and though the poets were then, as they generally are, men of finer mould than their fellows, yet their example, and still more their poems passing from mouth to mouth, must have created a widespread belief in their principles. It is certain that the roaming Badawî, like the mediæval knight, entertained a chivalrous reverence for women,—although he too, like the knight, was not always above a career of promiscuous gallantry: but there was always a certain glamour of romance about the intrigues of the Badawî. He did not regard the object of his love as a chattel to be possessed, but as a divinity to be assiduously worshipped. The poems are full of instances of the courtly respect displayed by the heroes of the Desert towards defenceless maidens, and the mere existence of so general an ideal of conduct in the poems is

a strong argument for the chivalry of the Arabians; for among those wild Sons of the Desert, the abyss between the ideal accepted of the mind and the attaining thereof in action, was narrower than it is among nations now held to be more advanced.\*

The true Arab, as he was in the so-called 'Times of Ignorance,' we can now no longer see; and we cannot but regret our loss,—for the Pagan Arab is a nobler type of man than his descendant of The Faith,† though there are nobler types of manhood even than he. There is much that is admirable in his high mettle, his fine sense of honour, his knightliness, his 'open-handed, both-handed' generosity, his frank friendship, his spirit of manly independence: and the faults of this wild and reckless nature are not to be weighed against its many excellences. When Muḥammad turned abroad the current of Arab life, he changed the character of the people. The mixture with foreign nations, and the comparatively quiet town-life that succeeded to the tumult of conquest, gradually effaced many of the leading ideas of the old Arab nature; and the remnant that still dwell in the land of their fathers have lost much of that nobleness of character which in the case of their ancestors covered many shortcomings. Muḥammad in part destroyed the Arab and created the Muslim; and the last is no amends for the first. The modern Badawî is neither the one nor the other; he has lost the greatness of the old type without gaining that of the new. As far as the Arabs alone are concerned, the great reformer effected a temporary good and a lasting harm.‡

As to the condition of women in the trading centres,—the cities and towns,—it is certain that in the Desert, woman was regarded as she has never been regarded in Arabia since the ascendancy of Islâm. The modern ḥarīm-system, which owes its

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kūr-ân*, Introd. xxvii.

† Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs*, p. 56 (No. 176); Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, i. 390.

‡ Lane, *Selections from the Kūr-ân*, Introd. pp. xxxv-vi.

origin distinctly to the founder of The Faith,\* was there as yet undreamed of. The maid of the Desert was unfettered by the ruinous restrictions of modern life in the East.† As an instance of her dignity and respect it should be noted that she was free to choose her own husband,—a trace of which usage we see in the case of Muḥammad himself, who was the honoured subject of overtures of marriage in the case of his first wife, the wealthy Khudaija. The maid of the Desert was, moreover, free to bind over her husband to have no other wife than herself. As to herself, she was at liberty to receive male visitors (even though they were strangers) without any suspicion,—for her virtue was too dear to her, and too well assured, to need the vigilance of a keeper. To say to a hostile clan that their men had not the heart to give, nor their women the heart to deny, was among them the bitterest taunt that could be hurled at a foe,—for the chastity of the women of a clan was reckoned only next to the valour and generosity of its men. In those days, bastardy was an indelible stain. It was the wife who inspired the hero to deeds of glory; and it was her praise that he most valued when he returned triumphant.‡

\* Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 350 (2nd edn. 1857).

† These restrictions are sanctioned in the Qur'ân in the following terms;—'Ye People! ye have rights demandable of your wives, and they have rights demandable of you—upon them it is incumbent not to violate their conjugal faith, neither to commit any act of open impropriety:—which things if they do, ye have authority to shut them up in separate apartments, and to beat them with stripes, yet not severely. But if they refrain therefrom, clothe them and feed them suitably. And treat your women well; for they are with you as captives and prisoners: they have not power over anything as regards themselves. And ye have only taken them on the security of God; and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God.' This may have been an improvement on the barbarism of the Arabs, but the Christian reader will fail to perceive how such a system could prove ameliorative of the condition of Christian women in any age.—Cnf. Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, 485-6.

‡ We seem to have a remnant of this pre-Islâmite usage in the custom of Muḥammad and the early Muslim warriors of taking their women-folk with them to battle. The reader of Sir William Muir's *Annals of the Early Caliphate* will meet with many a thrilling incident connected with this romantic usage,—a usage which, as Burton shews, has not even yet died out.—Cnf. Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 93 (2nd edn. 1857).

The hero of Desert song thought himself happy even to die in guarding some women from their pursuers. Hence 'Antara, wounded to the death, halted alone in a narrow pass, and bade the women press on to a place of safety. Planting his spear in the ground, he supported himself on his horse, so that when the pursuers came up, they knew not that he was dead, and dared not approach within reach of his dreaded arm. At length, the horse moved, and the body fell to the ground, and then the enemy perceived that it was but the corpse of the hero that had held the pass. In death, as in a life *sans peur et sans reproche*, this hero was true to the chivalry of his race.\*

The traditions of the Arabians of the 'Times of Ignorance' have embalmed many instances like this of the knightly courtesy of the Arab chief. In the old days, as an ancient writer says, the true Arab had but one love,—and her he loved till death, and she him. Even when polygamy came to be a custom among them,—as it eventually did, especially in the towns,—it was not what is meant by polygamy in a modern Muslim State: it was rather the polygamy known under the patriarchal system, of which we see an instance in the case of Abraham and Sarah. There is much in the fragments of the poetry of the old Arabs which has come down to us, that reflects this fine spirit. It is oft-times 'tender and true;' and even Islâm could not wholly root out the real Arab sentiment,—which reappears in Muslim times in the poems of Abû Firâs. Especially valuable is the evidence of the old poetry with regard to the love of a father for his daughters. Infanticide, which it is common to attribute to the whole Arab nation of every age before the establishment of Islâm, was, in truth, exceedingly rare in the Desert, and after almost dying out, only revived about the time of Muḥammad. It was probably adopted by poor and weak classes, either from inability to support their children, or in order to protect themselves from the stain of having their children dishonoured by stronger

\* Lane, *Selects from the Kūr-ân*, Introd. p. xxviii.

tribes, and the occasional practice of this suicidal and barbarous custom affords no ground for assuming an unnatural hatred and contempt for girls among the ancient Arabs. The following verses of a father to his daughter tell a different story:—

'If no Umaima were there, no want would trouble my soul,  
no labour call me to toil for bread through pitchiest night.  
What moves my longing to live is but that well do I know  
how low the fatherless lies, how hard the kindness of kin.  
I quake before loss of wealth, lest lacking fall upon *her*,  
and leave her shieldless and bare, as flesh set forth on a board.  
My life she prays for, and I from mere love pray for her death,—  
yea *death*, the gentlest and kindest guest to visit a maid.  
I fear an uncle's rebuke,—a brother's hardness,—for her:  
my chiefest end was to spare her heart the grief of a word.'

The following lines, again, do not breathe the spirit of infanticide:—

'Fortune has brought me down (her wonted way)  
from station great and high to low estate:  
Fortune has rent away my plenteous store:  
of all my wealth, honour alone is left.  
Fortune has turned my joy to tears: how oft  
did Fortune make me laugh with what she gave!  
But for these girls, the Qata's downy brood,  
unkindly thrust from door to door as hard,  
Far would I roam, and wide, to seek my bread  
in Earth that has no lack of breadth and length.  
Nay, but, our children in our midst, what else  
but our hearts are they, walking on the ground?  
If but the wind blow harsh on one of them,  
my eye says 'No' to slumber, all night long.'\*

These quotations shew clearly enough the position which women held in the sentiments of the so-called pagan Arabs.† It is hardly to be wondered at that the Badawis themselves confess that the condition of women under Islāmic influence is worse than what it was in the old chivalrous times. The wife of noble blood, says Sir William Muir, held, under the old chivalrous code

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kur-ān*, Introd. pp. xxix-xxx.

† Some specimens from the *Songs of Antar* also, of the value set upon womanhood in pre-Islāmite times and of the high sentiments of honour then cherished towards the weaker sex, may be seen in Burton, *Pilgrimage*, ii. 95 (2nd edn. 1857).

of the Arabs, a position of honour and supremacy in the household from which she could be ousted by no base-born rival, however fair or fruitful: but she was now, under the law of the reformer, to be, in the estimation of her husband, but one amongst many, to whose level she was gradually being lowered. If his slave-girls bore him children, they became at once (as the children of an *Umm Walad*, or 'freed wife'\*) *free*, and in point of legitimacy and inheritance, the offspring of such were equal to the children of the free and noble wife. Thus the old Arab chivalry towards the weaker sex came rapidly to disappear, even so early as in the days of the first Khalifas.†

The evils that have thus overtaken the female sex arise from the unfortunate fact that Islām is a social system as well as a religion,—and herein lies the great difficulty of fairly estimating its good and its bad influence on the world.‡ It is but in the nature of things that the teacher who lays down the law as to the relation of man to God, should also endeavour to appoint the proper relation between man and his neighbour. Christianity was a social as well as a religious reform; but its social regulations were too indefinite, or at all events too impracticable, for any wide acceptance among those who professed it. Islām was less fortunate. Muḥammad not only propagated a religion,—he laid down a complete social system, containing minute regulations for a man's conduct in all circumstances of life, with definite promise of due rewards or penalties according to his attendance to these rules. As a religion, Islām has certain elements of greatness;—it has taught idolatrous peoples to worship but one God:

\* The term *Ummu'l-walad* (also spelt 'Omm al Walad' and 'Omm Walad') properly means 'the mother of a child,' and is applied in Muḥammadan law to a slave who bears a child to her owner. She and her child are considered 'free,' not by the authority of any text of the Qur'ān, but because Muḥammad gave to his slave-girl 'Mary the Qopt' her freedom on her bearing him Ibrāhīm.—Cnf. Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, 349.

† Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, 265, 271.

‡ Lane, *Selections from the Kur-ān*, Introd. p. lxxxviii.

but as a social system, it is a failure. It has misunderstood the relations of the sexes,—relations upon which the whole character of a nation's life depends,—and by degrading women, has degraded each successive generation of their children down an increasing scale of infamy and corruption,—until it seems almost impossible to reach a lower level of vice. In short, as Mr. Poole expresses it, the fatal spot in Islâm is the degradation of women.\*

The truth is, that many of the laws of Muḥammad betray, if Muhammadans will allow us to say so, the shortsightedness of their author to the extensiveness of their influence. The practice of polygamy would never be permitted by the founder of a religion designed to be general or universal. The continuance of polygamy *at all* most ever prove fatal to the universal acceptance of a religion,—even perhaps, though Christianity were not continually at hand to confront it,—for polygamy can never satisfy the needs of woman's heart.† And thus are Nature and policy united against the practice; and although it is in accordance with the licentious manners of one part of the world, yet mankind at large, not to say Christian people, hold it in abhorrence. Silence upon the subject, or an absolute prohibition of the practice, would have been the course of a man who wished to legislate for all people and for all time.‡

The true test of a nation's place in the ranks of civilization is the position of its women. When they are held in reverence,—when it is considered the most infamous of crimes to subject a woman to dishonour, and the highest distinction to protect her from wrong; when the family life is real and strong, of which the mother-wife is the centre and the heart; when each man's pulse beats loyal to womanhood,—then is a nation great. But when women are treated as playthings, toys, drudges,—of worth, only if they have beauty to be enjoyed or strength to labour;

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kur-ân*, Introd. p. lxxxix.

† The *Christian Remembrancer*, for Jan. 1855, p. 148.

‡ Cnf. Mills, *History of Muhammedanism*, 333-4.



when sex is considered the chief thing in a woman, and her heart and mind are forgotten; when a man buys women for his pleasure, and dismisses or sells them when his appetite is gluttoned,—then is a nation despicable.\*

Such is the state of things among all Muḥammadan nations. Exceptions, there assuredly are, in the case of individual households. It is hard to lay the blame altogether on Muḥammad: the real roots of the degradation of women in Muslim countries lie in the corrupting influence of heathen darkness, which long anterior to him and independently of him, enveloped those lands. But if his religion had been designed by the Almighty to supersede the religion of 'the Seed of Isaac,' it would have presented to heathen corruption a strong and purifying barrier. It has been well said by the learned writer whom we have cited, that Muḥammad might have done better than he did in respect of his policy towards the weaker sex. He might have boldly swept away the corrupt traditions of society which he found to exist among the heathen Arabs,—he might have unveiled the women, intermingled the sexes, and punished by the most severe measures any license which such association might at first have encouraged. With the boundless influence he possessed through the length and breadth of Arabia, he might have done this; and then, the new system, once fairly settled, and the people grown accustomed to it, the good effects of the change would have begun to shew themselves. So we may think: but there is reason to believe that such an idea could not occur to such a mind as his. We are dealing with a social system of the seventh century, and not of the nineteenth; and though the founder of Islām was, indeed, the greatest man in that century, his ideas about women were those of his cotemporaries in Arabia. He looked upon them as charming snares to 'the true believer',—ornamental articles of furniture difficult to keep in order,—pretty playthings: but that a woman should have been the counsellor and equal friend of man, is an

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kur-an*, Introd. p. lxxxix.

idea that does not seem to have occurred to him. It is true that he appears to have always entertained feelings of respect for Khudaija; but this is partly accounted for by the fact that she was old enough to have been his mother, and partly by the fact that his marriage to her raised him at once from a position of poverty to the very front rank of local wealth and ease. But this feeling of respect for his first wife (which was further shewn in the fact that during her lifetime he took no second wife) found no counterpart in his opinions regarding women in general or in his treatment of them. 'Woman,' said he, 'was made from a crooked rib; and if you try to bend it straight, it will break: therefore treat your wives kindly.' Muḥammad was not the man to make a social reform affecting women, nor was Arabia the country in which such a change should be initiated, nor, perhaps, were Arab ladies the best subjects for the experiment.\*

Still, it is impossible to deny that Muḥammad attempted, at least, to do something for the amelioration of the condition of Arabian women. He placed a definite limit to the number of wives his followers might lawfully appropriate; he laid his hand with the utmost severity on the incestuous marriages which were then rife in Arabia; he required husbands to support their wives for four months after divorcing them; he made irrevocable divorce less common by adding the rough and revolting condition that a woman who had been three times divorced from her husband might not return to him without first being married to another man;† and he laid down the law that four witnesses should be requisite in order to establish against a married wife a charge of adultery,—a provision which, of course, rendered adultery impossible to prove. We say 'impossible',—for the law is interpreted

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kur-an*, Introd. pp. lxxxix—xci.

† The reader who cares to see evidence of the extremely disgusting condition of things to which this regulation has given rise in Muḥammadan lands not under the law of England, may consult the statements of a Muḥammadan writer in the work of Joseph Morgan, *Mah. metism Explained*, i. 279—93, and ii, Introd. pp. xii—xiii.

by the Muslim divines as meaning that each of the said four witnesses must actually have seen with their own eyes the act; and that failing this, they are not qualified witnesses. So that the law thus laid down is so merciful as to be manifestly self-destructive.\* The law, moreover, in respect of the number of cotemporary wives which every Believer might take, is also, in some sense, self-destructive,—for the possession of the *ḥarīm* consisting of four women who have legal claims upon a man, involves the probability of the sacrifice of domestic peace; and the expense of keeping several wives, each of whom must have a separate suite of apartments or a separate house, is so great that not more than one Muḥammadan in twenty can afford it.†

It is, perhaps, not so much in the matter of wives as in that of concubines that Muḥammad made a mistake,—if, indeed, in the case of a man believed to have been under special Divine instruction in the matter, ‘mistake’ is an admissible term. The condition of the concubine, or female slave, in the East is indeed deplorable. She is wholly at the mercy of her owner, who may do as he pleases with her and her companions whom he possesses,—for the Muḥammadan is not restricted in the number of his concubines as he is in that of his wives. The female white slave is kept by the master solely for the purpose of his own sensual gratification; and when he is tired of her, she is put up for sale. And thus she passes from master to master,—a very wreck of womanhood. Her condition, indeed, is a little improved if she bear a son to her tyrant; though even then, he is at liberty to refuse to acknowledge the child as his own. But by reason of the fondness of the Oriental for male offspring, this is a liberty of which he seldom avails himself. There is no reason to doubt the considerateness of Muḥammad himself towards his bond-women;

\* The reader who would have proof of this should consult Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Ch. 50 (p. 927), where, in a foot-note, he quotes from Abū'l-Fida, *Annalis Moslemici*, 71 (edn. Reiske) language which we must leave the reader to see for himself.

† Lane, *Selections from the Kur-an*, Introd. p. xci.

but one cannot forget the unutterable brutalities which he suffered his followers to inflict upon conquered nations in the taking of women into what is euphemistically termed 'slavery.' The Muslim soldier was at full liberty to do as he pleased with any 'infidel' woman he might meet with on his victorious march. When one thinks of the thousands of women,—all of them mothers, sisters, and daughters,—who must have suffered untold shame and dishonour by the license thus authorized by The Prophet of God, it is impossible for a Christian to find words to express his horror.\*

And this brutal indulgence, which The Faithful believe to have been sanctioned for their own especial behoof by the good Father above, has left its mark on the Muslim character,—nay, on the whole character of life in the East.† In the present day, just as in the earlier days of The Faith, are young Christian girls dragged away from their homes and handed over to the cruel lusts of a Turkish voluptuary, whose sole plea for this violation of all that is most sacred in humanity is that he does it 'by the Order of God.' And not only are these tender girls thus sold off from hand to hand among men who were born and bred in the Faith of Muḥammad, it is not uncommon for our own countrymen in the East to secure the protection of law in the pursuit of their brutal appetites by 'changing their religion.'‡ The contagion has spread to English men; and thus do those, who by their

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kur-ān*, Introd. p. xcii.

† It has left its mark abundantly on the literature of Arabia. Even the *Ahādīs* ('Traditionary literature relating to Muḥammad') abound in obscene passages. Some of the poems of Hassân, a contemporary of The Prophet's, are exceeding gross. Dr. Sprenger (*Life of Mohammad*, 45) gives a couple of edifying specimens, in which are described the pleasures of heaven as promised by Muḥammad to all true followers of his.

‡ This, in fact, is the true history of all the so-called 'conversions' to Muḥammadanism professed by Europeans;—at least, of all whose history we have known. It is not unknown, either, that 'Native Christians,' so called, have 'gone over to Muḥammadanism' on the same principle. A course of misconduct, loss of character, a sense of isolation, a drunken bout, an illicit intrigue, the abjuration of Christianity, and the 'turning Muḥammadan',—such, speaking generally, are the steps by which such 'conversions' are preceded.

nationality and better knowledge should be prompted to raise their protest, as men of honour if not as 'Christians,' against the abomination, follow the example of The Faithful, and help in the ruin of womanhood.\*

And thus is concubinage the black stain in the Faith of Islâm. With such views of women as Muḥammad entertained, we could hardly have expected him to have done better: on the other hand, he could scarcely have done worse. But there are one or two considerations that afford a kind of temporary relief to the dreariness of the picture. In the first place, the evils of the system as it affects the weaker sex are seen mainly among the rich; and these, as is the case all the world over, are the minority. In a sense, therefore, it may be said that the canker has not eaten into the whole of the Muḥammadan population. In the second place, prostitution, in the ordinary sense of the term, is not so common in Muslim communities as in so-called Christian countries. The courtesan forms a very small item in the census of a Muḥammadan city; and even there, she is retained more for strangers than for the inhabitants. Thus is the social system of Muḥammad free from a defect which social systems better in other respects than his are subject to. Instances frequently occur in the law-courts of India which shew the strong feeling that exists on the subject among the Musalmâns resident in that land. They appear to consider it quite inconceivable that an adherent of The Faith should have illicit intercourse with a free woman of his own Faith; and this inconceivableness of the action is urged, in trials, as evidence of the legitimacy of children. Of course, this conderation does not exclude the idea of members of The Faith holding unlawful intercourse with persons of a different creed. But while we admit the existence of this feature in the practical aspect of the social system of Muḥammadans, it must not be forgotten that the liberty allowed them by their law in the matter of concubinage, does not very materially differ from prostitution;

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kur-an*, Introd. p. xcii.

and that whilst prostitution is directly forbidden by Christianity, concubinage is as directly sanctioned by Islâm.\*

One would think that long intercourse with Europeans might have raised the estimation in which women are held in the East ; but it is certain that women there are no better off now than they were before the advent of the European element. Either travellers in the East are not in all instances the best specimens of Christian morality ; or the oriental mind has a peculiar aptitude for assimilating the bad and rejecting the good in any system with which it is brought into contact. A well-known correspondent of a leading daily print writes thus of the domestic life of The Faithful in Turkey:—‘It is obvious that the home life of any people will depend almost entirely on the position which is assigned to women. It is not necessary to inquire what this position is according to the teaching of the sacred books of a race. Between Christianity and Islâm it is enough to notice that there is apparently no country where the former is the prevailing religion, in which woman is hindered by religion from obtaining a position almost, if not quite, on an equality with man ; and similarly, no country where the latter prevails, where woman is not in a degraded position. Under Christianity she is everywhere free : under Islâm she is everywhere a slave. The pious Mohammadan, like the pious Jew, thanks God that he has not been made a woman : the pious Mohammadan woman, like the pious Jewess, thanks Him that she has been made according to her creator’s will. Man and woman alike recognize that to be a woman is to be in an inferior condition. This feeling as to the degradation of woman so pervades Turkey that the poorer classes of Christians there have even become infected by it. When a son is born, there is nothing but congratulations : when a daughter, nothing but condolences. A polite Turk, if he has occasion to mention his wife, will do so with an apology. He regards it as a piece of rudeness to mention the fact to you :

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kur-an*, Introd. p. xcii-iii.

and it would be equally rude for him to inquire after your wife, or to hint that he knew you were guilty of anything so unmentionable as to be possessed of one.\* Charles the Twelfth told his queen that she had been chosen to give children, and not advice: the Turk regards woman as destined solely for the same purpose and for his pleasure. Probably polygamy is of itself sufficient to account for the way in which Mohammadans regard woman. But whether this is so or not, there is one influence which polygamy asserts which accounts for the low ideal of woman prevalent in all Muslim countries. When a man has a number of wives, it is impossible that they can all become his companions and confidantes, or that one of them can become his companion and confidante in the same way as if he had but one wife. Hence a man who is limited to one will not be content with beauty merely: he must have a certain amount of intelligence and education. The Turk, on the other hand, has no reason whatever to think of anything excepting beauty: as he never means to see much of his wife, intelligence and education are matters of small account. If he can afford it, he will have a Circassian wife,—a woman who has been reared with the intention of being sold who has not an idea in her head, who has seen nothing, and knows nothing. To the great majority of Christians such a woman would be wholly ineligible as a wife, and as distasteful and objectionable as a South Sea Island beauty. But she satisfies the ideal of the Turk: she is beautiful; and beauty is all that he requires.†

\* This state of things is corroborated by so high and impartial an authority as Palgrave,—who, in the account he gives of the family of Tilâl, governor of Hâyl in Central Arabia, says,—‘He has some daughters too, but I do not know their number for, here, as elsewhere in the East, they are looked on as something rather to be ashamed of than otherwise, and accordingly are never mentioned. It will be long, he adds, ‘before this ungallant indication of ancient barbarism, fostered by Mahometan influences, disappears from Oriental manners.’—Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 135.

† Lane, *Selections from the Kur-an*, Introd. p. xciii-iv.

It is this sensual and degraded view of woman that destroys to so great an extent the good influence which the better part of the teaching of the Qur'an might otherwise exert in Muḥammadan lands. So long as women are held in so light an esteem, they will remain ignorant, and benighted, and sensual; and so long as mothers are what most Muslim mothers now are, their offspring will be ignorant, and fanatical, and vicious. In Turkey there are other influences at work besides the Muḥammadan social system; but Turkish women may serve as an instance of the state of things which that system encourages. In those early years spent at home, when the child ought to have instilled into him some germ of those principles of conduct by which men must walk in the world if they are to hold up their heads among civilized nations, the Turkish child is only taught the first steps towards those vicious habits of mind and body which have made his race what it is. It is in the ḥarīm-system that the root of the evil is mainly found. So long as that system keeps Turkish women in their present depressed state, so long will Turkish boys and girls be vicious and ignorant. It is quite certain that there is no hope for Muḥammadans as long as their women are compelled to remain what they are, and home training is the initiation of vice.\* If the mother is ignorant and vicious, the son cannot form a high ideal of womanhood: and thus is he barred off from the chivalrous spirit wherewith alone a man may reach to the highest love,—that

‘Subtle master under heaven,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable words,  
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.’

The Muḥammadan has no ideal of chivalry like this to make his life pure and honourable. His religion encourages an opposite view, and the women among whom he is brought up only confirm it.†

\* See a work entitled *The People of Turkey*, by a Consul's Daughter, Pref. p.xxii.

† Lane, *Selections from the Kur-ān*, Introd. p. xciv-v.



We have already had occasion to point out that Islām, by as much as it inculcates a belief in One only God, is assuredly an advance upon the religious systems of the savage races of Africa, and that its acceptance by them has so far been a good thing.\* But the good influence it has exerted among them is very partial and limited, even among the poorer classes. In communities where *all* are poor, Islām might prove in some respects an agent for improvement; but in lands where there are many grades of rank and wealth, the poor only ape in a humble manner the vices of those whom they are taught to regard as their betters. But in all civilized and wealthy countries, the social system of Islām exerts a ruinous influence on all classes; and if there is to be any great future for the Muḥammadan world, that system of society must be done away.

‘The woman’s cause is man’s: they rise or sink  
Together,—dwarfed or Godlike, bond or free.’

If Islām is to be a power for good in the future, it is imperatively necessary that the social system be cut off from the religion. At the beginning, among a people who had advanced but a little way on the road to civilization, the defects of the social system of Muḥammad were not so apparent. But now, when Orientals are desirous of meeting on equal terms with Europeans and are gradually coming to adopt the manners and customs of the West, it is clear that the condition of their women must be radically changed if any real and lasting good is to come of the Europeanizing tendency. It is not easy for Muḥammadans to see that the difficulty lies in the close connexion between the religious and the social ordinances of the Qur’ān. The two are so intermingled that it is hard to see how they can be disentangled without destroying both. The very theory of revelation, as understood by Muḥammadans, would have to be radically and essentially modified. They would have to give up their doctrine of the syllabic inspiration of the Qur’ān; and they would have to commence

\* On this point consult Macbride, *The Mohammedan Religion Explained*, 90.

the exercise of their moral sense in distinguishing between the particular and the general, the temporary and the permanent. They would have to recognize the fact that there is much in the Qur'ān and in the teachings of their Prophet which, though useful enough at the time, is inapplicable to the present conditions of existence; that his information was in many respects very imperfect, and his judgment sometimes at fault; that the moral sense is as truly capable of education as is the intellect; and that what may have been to all appearance moral and wise in the seventh century, may conceivably be immoral, unwise, and suicidal in such a state of society as that of the age in which we now live.\*

Closely allied to this social aspect of Qur'ānic law is another—*viz.* Slavery. In apology for this system, considered as an organic part of the religion of Muḥammad, it is usual to put forward several well-worn arguments, which though they contain a great deal of truth, have the misfortune of being beside the mark. In the first place, we are cautioned against taking our ideas of Muslim slavery from the slavery which for the last generation or two has been the subject of much writing and much legislation in countries professedly Christian. There is, as Burton has said,

\* Lane, *Selections from the Kur-ān*, Introd. pp. xcv-vi. According to traditions given in the *Misqat'u'l-Masdbih* (i. 46, 51) Muḥammad himself said,—‘I am no more than a man. When I order you anything respecting religion, receive it; and when I order you concerning the affairs of the world, then I am nothing more than man.’ He even seemed to have presentiment that the time would come when his minor regulations would call for revision:—‘Ye are in an age,’ said he, ‘in which if ye abandon one tenth of what is ordered, ye will be ruined. After this, a time will come when he who shall observe one tenth of what is now ordered will be redeemed.’ If Muḥammadans would but take these warnings of their Prophet to heart, there would be some prospect of the preservation of their Faith from decadence. The principle, indeed, of moral criticism as applied to the Qur'ān has already been admitted by some few of the higher intellects among them. But the majority, refraining from the exercise of individual judgment in the matter of religion, regard these few as heterodox.

truth in the terrible remark of Sonnini, that 'the severe treatment under which the slaves languish in the West Indies is the shameful prerogative of civilization, and is unknown to those nations among whom barbarism is reported to hold sway.\* Under the regulation of the Qur'ân, slavery is of a better type than that, and is surrounded by certain important safeguards. In fact, under Muslim rule, all are slaves together, from the Pâshâ down to the humblest menial. Despot over the province which is in bondage to his rule, he is himself but the slave of the greater despot, his Sovereign master. The wife is the slave of her husband, rather than his companion and partner; and their domestic servant is the bond-slave of them both. Slavery, indeed, pervades the whole social and political life of the people. But as compared to the slavery with which civilized countries have become familiar, Muḥammadan slavery is mild; for kind treatment of the slave is enjoined in the Qur'ân: nor is slavery considered dishonoring; for where all are more or less in the condition of slaves, servitude ceases to be a disgrace; and where all are equally subject to the absolute will of the Sovereign, the sharp distinctions of rank disappear.†

It hence happens that in Muḥammadan countries, servitude becomes no barrier to a man's elevation to the highest offices of the State; the contrary is, in fact, the case.‡ The slave purchased in the market has a better chance of rising to the highest offices in the army and the State than the man of noble blood, not to say the member of the freeman class, whose very exemption from slavery (in its ordinary meaning) consigns him, however deserving, to a position of obscurity. The Pâshâ of the Syrian Caravan

\* Sonnini, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, vol. ii; Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 89.

† Stephens, *Christianity and Islâm*, 161. The reader who would pursue this subject further, should consult Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia*, i. 390-91, and ii. 217 (edn. Lond. 1838).

‡ Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 90. Cnf. Pitts, *Mahometans*, 172-3, 216, 225; Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 291, and ii. 281.

by which Burton travelled to Damascus, had been the slave of a slave. This, our traveller assures us, is but a solitary instance of cases perpetually occurring in all lands to which Muḥammadan rule extends. Said a Turkish officer in Egypt,—‘C’est un homme de bonne famille, il a été acheté.’\* Conversion to Islām, when followed, as it often is, by manumission, makes the slave at once the equal of his master; and the will of the sovereign, who is master of them both, may make him his master’s ruler.† Under these circumstances there is a direct incentive to kind treatment of slaves,—when, of course, the slaves happen to be of the male sex. Hence the bravest and most turbulent warriors of Islām have been men who were captive Janissaries and Mameluks. Even the thrones of Egypt and India have been occupied by whole dynasties of kings who had been slaves.‡ Sebuktegin, father of Maḥmūd the Magnificent, and founder of the Ghazavid dynasty, had been a slave: so, too, had Qutbu’d-Din, the conqueror of Delhi and its first king, and the true founder, therefore, of the Muḥammadan empire in India.§ The Sultān of Constantinople himself is necessarily of slave origin on the maternal side, and he is even familiarly spoken of as *Al-Waladu’l-Jāriya*, ‘the Son of a Slave-girl.’ Where strictly arbitrary power exists, birth, merit, popular esteem, must all be less sure guides to advancement than that capricious favour of the despot which his personal dependents have clearly the fairest chance of obtaining. No democracy is so hostile to anything like aristocratic and hereditary claims as is a perfectly arbitrary despotism. Thus is the favour of a despot more likely to be bestowed on a slave than a man of noble origin,—the policy of the despot being to suppress aspirants and to disallow those whose claims on the ground of aristocratic descent may tempt

\* Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 90.

† Pitts, *Mohometans*, 107; Burton, *Pilgrimage*, 250, 350.

‡ ‘Egyptian men,’ says Burton, ‘own unwillingly to being Egyptians; for the free-born never forget that the banks of the Nile have for centuries been ruled by the slaves of slaves’—Burton, *Pilgrimage*, i. 171 (2nd edn.).

§ Elphinstone, *History of India*, 320, 363, 370.

them to rivalry. His policy is to reduce all ranks as much as possible to one dead level of subjection, and thus effectually deprive the aristocracy of all motives to becoming leaders of rebellion. It hence happens that in all Muslim States, and at no place more than at the capital of the Turkish Empire, the men who have risen to the highest offices have generally been men who began by discharging functions the most menial and often the basest and most disgraceful, about the court of the sovereign.\*

All this may be very well for the slave; but what of the Empire? Do Christians—do even Muḥammadans—believe that such a method of supplying the highest offices of constitutional power, is likely in the nature of things to be better for the Empire than the supplying of those offices with persons duly trained for them? Is not such an arrangement directly responsible in a large degree for that permanent degradation of Muḥammadan countries with which we are all of us only too familiar? There is nothing in the utterances of the Qur'ān on the subject of slavery, which at all corresponds to this fitful and arbitrary use of despotic power; so that the slave who becomes thus suddenly exalted to a position for which he is in no way fitted, has to thank rather the fears of a despot than the ordinance of God.† And when the apologists of Islām have succeeded in explaining these difficulties, it will remain for them to shew in what respects such

\* Stephens, *Christianity and Islām*, 162; *The North British Review* (for Aug. 1855) p. 465. Consult, also, on this subject, Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 429.

† We should here remark that the elevation of persons of the lowest ranks of the body politic to the highest place of all, is not due to any beneficent genius distinctive of Muḥammadanism. It is, rather, an outcome (as has already been suggested) of Oriental slavery. Hence we find that long before the birth of Islām, Abrahā, the Christian king of Yaman in the Year of the Elephant, rose, from being the slave of a Roman merchant, to high rank in the Abyssinian army, and eventually to the throne of that great historical territory:—Cnf. Procopius, *De Bellis Persiarum*, cap. xx; Wright, *Christianity in Arabia*, 89. In this, as in so many other instances, therefore, those of the excellences (if it is not a misuse of the word) of Muḥammadanism which are not merely accidental, can be traced to some pre-Islāmite and mundane source.

a system of things can be said to substantiate the claim of Muḥammadanism to be the superior and supercessor of Christianity, and in what sense such a system proves that through the seed of Ishmael all nations of the earth have been blessed.

This is the best that has ever been said of Muḥammadan slavery. And those whose minds are so peculiarly constituted that they see in it nothing but blessing to the world at large, have even then to bear in mind that such an unnatural method of supplying offices of power is not a result but an accident,—not a result of Qur'ānic law, but an evidence of the base uses to which this ordinance of Islām may be put when the power of monarchs is not curbed and tempered by constitutional law. If this is the best and brightest side of Islāmic slavery, what is the darker side likely to be!

The next best argument by which the apologists of Islām defend the system of slavery is framed on the principle with which they have so well familiarized us,—that 'two blacks do make a white.' The institution of slavery, they tell us, long enjoyed the support of the dignitaries of the English episcopal body.\* But what the Muḥammadan has to prove is that slavery has been established by the Divine Being as an ordinance for ever; and that in this view Islām raises mankind to a higher level than Christianity does. There is all imaginable difference between an evil that admits of reform and an evil that does not. We do not blame the enemies of Christ if by having recourse to this argument they wished to shew that those who were responsibly for the conduct of the affairs of the British nation acted inconsistently with the teachings of the New Testament. The evil received the sanction of the British Legislature at a period when that Legislature did not represent the Christianity or even the

\* Syed Ahmed Khan, *Benefits of Islām to the World*, 21. Mr. Keane, the latest of European 'Hājīs,' while manifesting unquestionable signs of the soundness of his 'Churchmanship,' rides roughshod over some very tender places when alluding to the question of 'Church.' For proof of this the reader may consult his work entitled *Six Months in Meccah*, 31-2.

intelligence of the nation. Inasmuch as our opponents blame the church dignitaries, it is but right to say that the majority of the British people do not believe that those dignitaries did their duty in respect of this matter: nay more, the support so long given by them to the West African slave-trade has often been cited by the foes and even by the friends of Christianity to prove that they are out of their proper place in the Legislative Council of the nation. Be this as it may, even the strongest objector could not contend that the British Legislature of the present day would defend such an institution;—it certainly could not inaugurate it. This impossibility arises from the more representative character of the present Legislature; and it enables us to say that the West African slavery, so far from being in any way attributable to Christianity, was not even the child of the British nation, but owed both its origin and its continuance to evil men and to greed of filthy lucre. All this is borne out by the fact that as soon as the nation was made aware of the evil that was being thus perpetrated in her name in remote regions of the earth, she at once made, as far as in her lay, the *amende honourable*,—rendering the trade illegal by special enactment, paying from her own resources the cost of emancipation, giving her voice and all her influence against it in the Councils of other nations, holding herself in readiness to spend her money and spill her blood in the work of suppressing it, opening her gates to the slave and affording him secure asylum, and declaring it impossible that a slave should breathe within her borders.

The argument, therefore, which was for so long a period available to the apologists of Islâm, from the complicity in the slave-trade of a Legislature bearing the holy name of Christ, now happily no longer exists. But Muslim slavery still exists; and it is bound to exist as long as belief in the Qur'an exists.\* In the case of England, it was legalized in disregard of the law of Christ, and without the voice of the nation; and under the light

\* Mills, *History of Muhammedanism*, 333—7.

of knowledge, it had to vanish: in Islām, slavery is established for ever by a law that can never be superseded, and never even modified. The discontinuance of the West African slave-trade shews that it was not in accordance with the authority of the New Testament, and was not a command enjoined on Christians as an ordinance for ever. The statement therefore of Mr. Higgins, who is quoted with 'thankfulness' by the Maulvī already named, that 'the legality of slavery is admitted in almost every page of the Gospels and Epistles,'\* is not in accordance with fact. And as to the silence of the New Testament respecting any express and elaborate prohibition of slavery, it may be inferred that the Author of the Book deemed it wiser to leave the practice to find its remedy eventually in the natural spread of Christian maxims and the unfettered operation of Christian truth and Christian love.

We are bound to admit, from a mass of evidence, that the apologists of Islām deplore and deprecate the existence of slavery as an authorized portion of the Islāmic system. Though so much has been said (and said with apparent truth, when we remember what the West African slave-trade was) regarding the comparative mildness of the domestic slavery of Muḥammadans, yet even Mr. Godfrey Higgins (who, if a man may judged by his words, must be one of the most damaging apologists that Muḥammad has yet had) goes so far as to admit that it is 'no doubt indefensible.'!† This, together with the statement of Sayyid Aḥmad Khāñ, that Muḥammad 'did almost entirely abolish slavery,'‡ is assuredly a great compliment to the cause of liberty for which Christians contend.

\* Syed Ahmed Khan, *Benefits of Islām to the World*, 21. We have not been able to obtain a copy of the work of this writer, and are dependent for the quotations we make from it and for the opinion we have formed of its author upon the citations made in the work of Maulvī the Honourable Mr. Sayyid Aḥmad Khāñ Bahādur.

† Syed Ahmed Khan, *Benefits of Islām to the World*, 21. The citations made from this writer by the learned Maulvī are, in the judgment of the dispassionate English reader, anything but helpful to the cause which the Maulvī seeks to serve.

‡ Syed Ahmed Khan, *Benefits of Islām to the World*, 24.



Burton, again, who was never yet charged with an excess of 'Christian bigotry,' after noting that though it is undoubtedly true that in Muslim communities the slave often fares better than the servant, and even than the freemen of the poorer orders, remarks that this, 'of course, in no wise affects the question of slavery *in the abstract*.\* Such statements shew that even the friends of Muḥammadanism are themselves ashamed of slavery in these days and that they would be glad if they could say that it is not sanctioned in the Qur'ān. They may well be ashamed of it, when they remember the use which The Faithful have always made of that sanction,—that to that sanction is to be attributed the fact that slavery, in one form or another, is a distinguishing institution of all Muḥammadan countries, and that immense numbers of the weaker sex are bought and sold in the markets of the East for purposes which it is a shame even to mention. The most abominable instance of this that we have ever read is connected with 'the Holy Mecca,' and the witness is one whose name the apologists of Islām ever quote as high authority,—'the accurate Burckhardt.'† Whether for labour or for vice, the trading in human flesh is attested by all travellers. Under the teaching of the Qur'ān the slave-owner is taught to feel that such possession is not a thing to be ashamed of, and that his fellow-creatures, bought for money, are as much his property as any other chattels which he obtains by the same means.‡ The slavery

\* Burton, *Pilgrimage to Meccah and Medinah*, i. 90.

† Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 218. Similar testimony is borne by the other travellers; but though the disgusting facts jar in no way on the moral sense of the Muḥammadan and do not affect his belief in the sanctity of 'the Holy Mecca,' we warn the Christian reader that he had better not refer to the page.

‡ 'Female slavery,' says Sir William Muir, (*Life of Mahomet*, 347,) 'being a condition necessary to the legality of the coveted indulgence (of unlimited and unrestricted cohabitation) will never be put down by any Musalmān community with a willing and hearty coöperation.' On the subject of the laxity of morals connected with female slavery, the evidence of the Muḥammadan Princess, cited above, who lately visited Makka, may once more be taken. Speaking of the great numbers of African and Georgian slave-girls, the reigning Begam of Bhūpāl writes, — 'Some of

of women in Islām is but a euphemy for concubinage, and a synonym for it. Women taken in war, moreover, are by Qur'ānic law, to be reduced to slavery in *that* sense of the term,—and this, even though they be already \*married.\* And thus is the Qur'ān responsible for legalized concubinage without limit and to the end of the world.

But the intelligent amateur instructively reminds us that Muḥammad was an Oriental, and that he gave laws to people who were in a condition but little removed from the brute creation in their various social practices. He tells us, moreover, that in certain conditions of society, such as those which existed in Arabia, domestic slavery of the sort which the Qur'ān prescribes may be a beneficent institution.† But he forgets to tell us that the Qur'ānic law, being 'like the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not,' stamps with the brand of slavery for ever all who become its victims; that while on the one hand it reduces to a state of degradation every civilized State over which it obtains ascendancy, it renders impossible the social and moral elevation beyond a certain point, of even the most degraded peoples. It forces degraded peoples into a common mould, and leaves upon

them are taken in marriage; and after that, on being sold again, they receive from their masters a divorce, and are sold in their houses. That is to say, they are sent to the purchaser from their master's house on receipt of payment, and not exposed for sale (in the ordinary way) in the market-place. They are only *married* when purchased for the first time. When the *poorer* people buy girls, they keep them for themselves, and change them every year as one would replace old things by new.' Such, according to a shrewd observer,—herself an adherent of the Muslim faith,—are the results of female slavery in the holiest city in Islām.—Cnf. The Begam of Bhūpāl, *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, Translated by Mrs. W. Osborne, 1870; Muir, *Rise and Decline of Islām*, 34.

\* Stobart, *Islām and its Founder*, 193. Sir William Muir expresses well (*Life of Mahomet*, 349) the feeling of every Christian mind when he says,—'The subject is *not* one which I can explain or illustrate further without offence to decency. The reader must believe at second hand that the whole system is vile and revolting.'

† 'As regards the general condition of women,' says the Honourable Mr. Sayyid Amīr 'Alī (*Life of Mohammed*, 243) 'the amelioration Islām effected in their status alone is sufficient stamp it as one of the most beneficent institutions the world has seen.'

them all a certain impress; but it leaves the filthy 'filthy still,' and the barbarian a barbarian still. Any doubt on this point should be speedily removed by study of the pages of Burckhardt and Palgrave, who give us the best account that learning and wisdom and charity can devise of the condition of that country where Muḥammadanism has had the best chance and an undisputed field.\*

Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece were severally taken by the sword of the Saracen; and what has been the result? The fairest fields of earth have withheld from man their natural products, and have been reduced to common lands where with difficulty the wandering herds of cattle find their poor fare.† Islām has rendered the world none the happier, none the richer, for the vast treasures which the Almighty has secreted in those once prosperous and most promising of all lands. What measure of civilization is visible there, is either the remnant of times anterior to Islāmite domination, or is the inevitable consequence of proximity to progressive countries. Mr. Lake seeks to remove the impression that the degradation of south-eastern Europe was the result of Muḥammadan invasion, and says that the eastern empire had sunk 'to the lowest depths of corruption'

\* The powerlessness of Islām, even when left an undisputed occupant of the field, has been well pointed out by Stobart, *Islām and its Founder*, 225. One of the arguments by which Maulvī Amīr 'Alī (*Life of Mohammed*, 226) seeks to prove the excellence of polygamy as compared with monogamy is that it is 'absolutely needful for the preservation of women from starvation or utter destitution.' 'This,' adds he 'is a fact, and we cannot blind ourselves to it'! He sustains it by saying that 'if reports and statistics speak true, I should say that the greatest proportion of the frightful immorality prevalent in the centres of civilization in the West, arises from absolute destitution.' It is strange that this author should not have remembered that the same statement is at least equally true in Muḥammadan communities where polygamy is the rule and the law,—a fact which proves that polygamy is not the cure either for the immorality of men or for the destitution of women. But we view this author with hope, and would not be hard upon him; for he evidently feels ashamed of the practice he thus defends where he says (on the next page),—'Polygamy will soon disappear under the new light in which the laws of the Prophet are being studied'!

† Evidence of this may be found in abundance in the enchanting pages of Dr. Newman (*Historic Sketches*, i. 116—158).

long before that event. It would, however, have been more to the purpose if he had told us how it happens that after twelve centuries of Muslim ascendancy, those lands have not risen from the degradation of which he speaks, or what effort has ever been made by the Muslim conquerors to ameliorate their condition. His contention does the case no good; it serves merely to awaken awkward enquiries. Wherever Islām has obtained sole ascendancy, the vast induction of twelve centuries tells one uniform tale,—that ascendancy has been the death-knell of all progress and the signal for general stagnation. The truth has been very strikingly put by one of the most recent German writers on the subject,—‘When carried out with due strictness, Islām brings all civilization to nothing.’\*

This deadly fruit is all of it the result of the fatalism which is the essence of Qur’ānic teaching, and which paralyzes man’s power to possess himself of God’s best gifts. In an age that has so plentifully reaped the fruits of peace, we are uttering what must almost seem a truism when we say that the true proof that a religion originates from the merciful Father of men is its fitness to flourish in any and every age, in any and every country, and in times of peace no less than in time of war. Tried by this test, Muḥammadanism has no *raison d’être*. It is only in times of disturbance that it reveals signs of life. Its normal condition is that its hand should be ‘against every man;’ in the absence of conflict, it stagnates. When it has nothing to fight about it has nothing to do.† The most fruitful portions of the world of

\* Tiele, *The Universal Religions*, 104. In this, therefore, the opinion of this great German student is not in agreement with that of a very learned adherent of the Muslim faith, the Honourable Mr. Sayyid Amir ‘Alī, who declares (*Life of Mohammed*, 225) that the Prophet was ‘the benefactor of the human race at large.’ The author is, perhaps, not aware that he would soon become the most famous man of his age if he could only prove that this statement is *true*. Indeed, a fact so patent to all, should not even need the trouble of proof.

† The reader who would pursue this melancholy aspect of the influence of The Faith, may with profit consult Maurice, *Religions of the World*, 28; Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 11-12; Freeman, *History of the Saracens*, 202 (2nd edn); Dr. Robson, in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for Jan. 1877.

the seventh century and most of its finest cities, fell into the hands of Muḥammadan rulers: what has been their history since then? What contributions have those places made to the general welfare of mankind? When the apologists of Islām can prove that these dire results have not emanated from Muḥammadan ascendancy, but from other causes; and when they can point us to phenomena which for beneficence to mankind in general can compare with the benefits that have flowed from the ascendancy of the followers of Christ in the walks of commerce and the walks of literature and general progress, then we shall have the material wherewith to estimate whether the posterity of Ishmael has or has not been a blessing to 'all the nations of the earth.'

We do not affirm that polygamy and slavery were the direct products of Islām: they are indigenous in the East and are deeply rooted in Oriental habits and customs. But they are the concomitants of Islām,—necessarily, inevitably, and uniformly so. Wherever Islām is established, they too are found to be established; and though by the rules of the Qur'ān they are (or, rather, they ought to be) brought under systematic regulation, and so far are alleviated, they are more closely riveted on Muḥammadan countries than on any others,—being invested there with a Divine sanction. Muḥammad found the trade in African girls\* so firmly established in Arabia, that he made no effort to abolish it. In this, as in the matter of the idolatrous practices at the Ka'ba, root-and-branch reform would have met with uncompromising resistance from the Arabs, and would have entailed unpopularity and the certain failure of his religious pretensions. There is, in brief, no evidence that he felt any *concern* to abolish the evil; and if we may suppose that he did, his failing to do so shews that he regarded its abolition as an impossibility. By his policy in regard to this abominable traffic,

\* The technical term in Arabia for a 'slave-girl' is 'Jāriya,' and 'Dakka' is the name of the 'bench' in the market-place on which girls have to stand when they are exposed for sale.

he has confirmed and extended it throughout the northern and eastern lands of Africa through the last twelve centuries. Thus is Muḥammad alone responsible for this traffic in human flesh, which with all its attendant vice and cruelty, over and above those which have followed the propagation of Islâm, he has established in God's dominions as an ordinance for ever.\*

And thus has Islâm taken up into itself these evil forms of Oriental life, and consecrated them,—while Christianity mitigates, ameliorates, and at length removes them. Under Islâm they enjoy the high sanction of religion and God, and they flourish accordingly. Hence it is that Muḥammadanism presents the most solid obstacle to the progress of civilization,—not to say Christianity. The function of Islâm is among uncivilized races: for them it has shewn a special affinity.† It adherents have never long enjoyed ascendancy over a race better than themselves. Their retention of ascendancy in Christian lands, like Syria, has never really been equivalent to a conquest in the matter of 'Faith.' It may fairly be said that in every nation where the conquests of this religion spread, the conquest was the conquest of force and not of reason. Men became Musalmâns because that was the only course open to them,—the only course by which they could retain possession of political freedom and equal rights. But no people ever threw off Christianity and became Muḥammadans through conviction of the superiority of the claims of Islâm in respect of considerations distinctly and purely spiritual. And as to other than Christian races, if there are any exceptions, those exceptions are the barbarous races in such countries as

\* Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 340; Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 298. The reader who would see for himself the best that a partisan of The Faith has to say in favour of slavery as authorized by Muḥammad, may consult Syed Ameer Ali, *Life of Mohammed*, 249—62. The cause must be in a bad way which can venture in such days as these to hope for a favourable verdict from intelligent men on the ground of an apology so self-contradictory in many respects, and withal so crude as that which this learned representative of The Faith has here given.

† See the *Quarterly Review* (for Jan. 1877), p. 231, seq.; and the *British Quarterly Review* (for Jan. 1872), p. 134.

Africa and the islands of the eastern Archipelago whose fetichism was of so low a type as to scarcely be rightly designated by the name of 'religion' at all. On such religions, Islâm is undoubtedly an improvement, as it was on the coarse fetichism of the Arabs of Muḥammad's own time: even the mechanical ascription of 'Unity' to God is better than the worship of a fetich. Christians have either consented to the alternatives of tribute and the implied degradation in the body politic, or they have suffered to the point of extermination. A few scattered instances of apostasy, in sheer self-protection from the brute violence of the Muḥammadan invader, there may have been; but no entire Christian nation has ever been wholly led captive to the Muslim faith, or has continued long under Muslim domination. The only races, *quâ* races, that have been 'converted' to Islâm have been races of fetich-worshippers and savages, who have never known by personal experience the blessing of Christian liberty and Christian light. So far, indeed, from taking captive a nation of Christians, it has been well remarked that it has not even taken captive any nation which possesses a rich literature. And genuine assimilation of the Muḥammadan with civilized peoples is as impossible as his genuine conquest of them. When he rules over such peoples, he never assimilates them, or is assimilated by them. The two elements may live side by side for centuries together, but they never fuse. And the reason is that the Qur'ân forbids the Muḥammadan to treat an 'Infidel' as his equal and brother. The alien invader, when that invader is a Muḥammadan, can only maintain his conquest by becoming an oppressor. The Muslim everywhere is stationary,—not because he is an Asiatic, but because he is a Muḥammadan; the Christian everywhere is progressive,—not because he is a European, but because he has imbibed in some measure the light and freedom and power which spring from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.\*

\* Freeman, *History of the Saracens*, 50, 52; Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 123; Stephens, *Christianity and Islâm*, 163; Tiele, *The Universal Religion*,

But space forbids us to pursue the subject further. Our purpose has been attained if what we have said has shewn the retrograde character of this unparalleled anachronism. Many able pens have in modern as well as in former times laboured to point out the mistaken nature of the system that evolved itself from the genius of Muḥammad. The ignorance of the founder of Muḥammadanism has proved to be its Nemesis. He blundered in announcing himself a prophet to all mankind, instead of to races inheriting Abrahamic instincts; to all peoples, instead of to barbarians only; to all the world, instead of to Arabia alone; and to all ages, instead of to the seventh century. He further erred in that he announced a religion which while it professed to supersede former ones, contained elements of such a nature as to render its acceptance logically impossible by those who had already embraced the former revelations. As a fulfilment of the hopes of the Jews, it was a burlesque; as an improvement on Christianity, it was an anachronism and an impertinence. Had Muḥammad been better informed regarding the real nature of Christianity, he could not have propounded such a religion as his at all. It was bound to be circumscribed, for it was a race religion; and it was bound to be transitory, for it does not lend itself to expansive influences. Appealing, as it does, to Abrahamic instincts, it can awaken no response in those who are not of Abrahamic descent. All others who embrace it, must do so (as history has abundantly shewn) from other than religious impulses.

In taking leave of this part of our subject we feel that the reader cannot be too earnestly reminded as to what is the real point at issue: forgetfulness of this has vitiated a great portion of all the discussion that has ever been carried on between the

103. One of the most striking treatises on the subject that has appeared in our own age, or indeed in any age, written in a style of surpassing beauty and finish, is the *Lectures on the History of the Turks in its relation to Christianity*, by Dr. J. H. Newman.



advocates of Christianity and the apologists of Islâm. We have already indicated several particulars in which things that differ have been mistaken for one another. And now, as to the subject of education;—Even though all that has been asserted by the admirers of Muḥammadanism, under this head, could, indeed be sustained, the real question would remain untouched : Islâm would still be ‘found wanting’ unless it could be shewn to make adequate provision for the spiritual nature of man. The concernment of a man with such things as secular information vanishes at the moment of death. To make good the claim of Islâm to supersede Christianity, it is necessary to prove that it prepares the spirit of man for another life than this, to be lived in the presence of God. This is not the contention of Christian bigotry; it is the contention of the Muḥammadan,—to whom, in fact, the question is nothing if not a religious one. The true Muslim believes the question to be one of the soul, salvation, and eternity. Islâm professes to meet the case; and to do so better than Christianity does.

Another mistake, a very common one, is to contend that Islâm is not more cruel than Christianity is,—the well-worn argument of ‘two blacks making a white.’ The argument is used in one of the most recent works, that of Mr. Lake,\*—who, by the way, appears to have been possessed of a special grudge against the Popes; for all through his work he confounds Romeism with Christianity. He argues as if Christianity had ever proved herself the handmaid of intolerance and persecution, and the friend of ignorance! Undoubtedly, when compared with that which calls itself the ‘Catholic’ Church of Christendom, Islâm is found not to suffer in the comparison in respect of these details. It has never, like Rome, made corpses of men whose only crime has been that they were enthusiasts in the pursuit of secular knowledge. But it was not Christianity that persecuted Galileo: on the contrary, the progress of knowledge dates from

\* Lake, *Islâm*, 113.

the time when men's minds outgrew the swaddling bands of Rome-ism, and declared themselves for freedom. But Islâm, *quâ* Islâm, has never proved itself the coadjutor and protector of intellectual liberty; though its apologists argue as though Islâm conferred such liberty, and Christianity took it away! The good which on every hand follows in the path of unfettered Christianity, they look upon as resulting not from that at all, but merely from the general course of the world's advancement; and yet if it be conceded that any good has ever been achieved by Muslims, they argue as if it had resulted directly from Islâm, and as if it were necessarily connected with it!

This mistake is closely akin to another,—that of looking upon nations as representatives of religion. Now, we have already shewn, in connexion with the subject of slavery, that to attribute to the Lord Jesus Christ all the evil that has been wrought by the people of England, would be to put darkness for light. The religion of Christ, properly understood, goes not in the blood of families, much less of nations. It is not hereditary, but is the result of faith,—a distinct act of the individual spirit. The representatives of the religion of the New Testament are the individuals, high and lowly, who have received salvation at the hands of the Redeemer,—the Lord and King of men.—This same mistake has been fallen into by writers on both sides of the controversy. It will be admitted that it is just as fatal to a sound conclusion, to hold Islâm responsible for all the evils committed by Muḥammadan Governments and Muḥammadan nations, as to hold Christianity responsible for all the evils committed by so-called Christian Governments and so-called Christian nations. The mistake lies in regarding either nations or Governments as representing religion at all. To attribute to the Muḥammadan religion all the crimes of the peoples who profess it, would be a manifest error. The inhuman cruelty of the Turk may not be a direct or even an indirect product of the religion the profession of which he inherited, and which he no more chose than he chose

the colour of his skin. Our point in reference to him is that his religion does him no good: whether as an object, or as an agent, or as a mere vehicle, of human advancement, he is as hopelessly out of the race as if he had never been touched by any religious influence at all. The quality which has lately been discovered in the Turk, and which has been designated 'gentlemanliness,' is a quality that does not result from his religion. This is evident from the fact that it attaches not to the Turkish people as a whole, but to the wearers of gold lace and smart official uniforms,—in all of which they have honoured with imitation those so-called Christian Powers with whom they have so long been compelled to have civilized intercourse as a matter of form. What of thin veneer of deportment there is about him is merely the necessary amenity of his position as standing in some sort of relation to such neighbours. But even this thin veneer is quite a recent phenomenon, and nothing was known of its existence till his alliance with Christian Powers rendered it necessary to represent that he was in some sense not a disgrace to the company in which, by strange irony, he at length found himself. Strangely enough, the discovery of his 'gentlemanliness' was not made till then, but his very name was a synonym in the British tongue for everything which a gentleman is not. If the 'gentlemanliness' of the Turk were the result of his religion, it should be something better than veneer,—it should permeate all the acts of his life, and the life of all the nation, and it should even have revealed something of its savour in Muḥammad 'Alī, of whose inhuman acquaintance poor Burckhardt was an unwilling participator. The genuine Muslim might well resent the unfairness of saddling upon Islām the monstrous satire on humanity of which the normal Turk is a specimen: this were to repeat the error of crediting the Man of Nazareth with the characteristics of the Inquisition.

We have thus fulfilled our promise to collate the opinions of some of the foremost of modern writers, who have studied this

subject of Muḥammadanism. In citing their opinions we have been desirous of acting towards Muḥammadans in a spirit of fair play,—assured that the interests of Christianity can in no way be imperilled by the fullest investigation and the freest enquiry. No interest which we wish to conserve could be advanced by ignoring what has been done by the Arabs in the cause of intellectual labour. None the less do we deprecate the error of calling things by the wrong names, and of putting one thing for another. To contend that religion is the same thing as mere secular knowledge, or that the ardent pursuit of philosophy or success in military adventure is a legitimate test of the divine origin of a man's religious opinions, is not a thing to which any mind inspired with an ambition for historical accuracy could lend itself. If Muḥammadanism can lay claim to no part in the formation of a higher order of character in men, if it does not mitigate and sanctify human sorrow, if it does not produce in men's hearts dispositions of love and counsels of peace, then its claim to eclipse the religion of Jesus is without foundation. Anything that is to be an improvement on that, must land us on a yet higher level in respect of these virtues.\*

In the conflict between Islām and Christianity, no mistake

\* The Honourable Mr. Sayyid Amīr 'Alī, quoting (in his *Life of Mohammed*, p. 112) a passage from Dr. Arnold's Sermons on the 'Wars of the Israelites,' and substituting the word 'Arabs' for the word 'Israelites,' appropriates the statement—'The Arab's sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world!' To adopt language descriptive of the policy of the Jews towards their enemies several centuries before the inauguration of the reign of the Messiah, with the view of shewing that it is also true of the religion of Muhammad, is (in our judgment) to miss the point of the controversy,—unless, indeed, the Honourable Gentleman means that the 'bloodiest executions' of the sword are an advance upon the gentle sway of Divine mercy. Such a statement carries its own refutation. 'Among the weapons,' says Irving (*Life of Mahomet*, 109) 'which fell to the share of Mahomet (after the battle with the Jewish tribe of the Banī Kainokā) are enumerated three swords, namely *Medham*, 'the Keen;' *Al Baltar*, 'the Trenchant;' and *Al Hatif*, 'the Deadly.' How these epithets reveal the awful spirit of Islām! ✓

could be greater than to suppose that either side has a monopoly of narrowness. No Muslim who is true to his religion could keep terms with a Christian who is true to his: there may be much of genuine friendship between them; but each believes the religion of the other to be essentially unsound. They are neither of them to be blamed for this absence of reconciliation: no one could respect either of them the more for making naught of his religious convictions. It is very common to confound consistency, which is a virtue, with narrowness, which is a vice; and no man who is afraid of being called ill names need seek his field of labour in this holy conflict. The Muḥammadan who is true to his faith will never make a sacrifice of Muḥammad from fear of being sneered at as a narrow partisan. Such a man knows, as every believer in Jesus knows, that there are even higher considerations than that of a man's own reputation, and he would be more concerned that his religion should be rightly represented than that he himself should elude animadversion. Of course, it is very pleasant to find one's opponent congratulating him on his 'broad-mindedness;' but a Muḥammadan who is 'worth his salt' believes in better approval than the transient approval of a fellow-creature. The man who is assured of the truth of the Qur'ān could never bring himself to a belief in the account of the life of Jesus as given in the Four Gospels; nor could the man who is assured of the truth of the New Testament, or even of the Old, by any process of logic twist his understanding to a belief in the Divine inspiration of the Qur'ān. Fidelity to Christ and fidelity to Muḥammad are like parallel lines,—they may go on eternally, but they can never meet.

The apologists of Islām sometimes urge that it does not matter what religion a man believes, provided only that he is sincere. They accordingly contend that non-Christian peoples should not be visited by the propagators of Christianity. They even designate the moral suasion of the evangelist as an imperti-

ment interference with the religious opinions of one's fellow-men. What have these apologists of Islâm to say to the overthrow of image-worship by force of arms? Yet this is what was done by Muḥammad, and what has been repeatedly done under his authority by his followers in unnumbered instances since his time. If this vigorous and muscular form of iconoclasm had the effect of clearing the intellect and elevating the morals of the people, there would still be the difficulty raised by the apologists referred to, as to the solemn duty of ignoring the authority of Christ and leaving all men to the unmolested enjoyment of their several religions. But every one knows that Muḥammadanism is a blight to human morality, and that the same virulent evils attend it in whatever country it gains political ascendancy.\* The sincere believer in image-worship is not found to be necessarily a worse man than the adherent of the creed of Islâm. Very much the reverse is the fact, if India may be cited as an example. If with the relinquishment of fetish-worship, the idolator imbibes the cruelty, fanaticism, and other vices bred by Islâm, his change of creed is a doubtful blessing. In practical life, a sincere Hindû is found to be a better man than a sincere Muslim.

But why do not the apologists of Islâm advocate a similar application of brute force to those various forms of image-worship which are in vogue in the different territories now under the dominion of the British Flag? If Muḥammadans had but the power, the same principle of brute force would be applied to-day to the extermination of Christianity in England. Will not those apologists tell us what advantage of any sort whatsoever would accrue to the great Empire of Britain if the sword of Islâm should now deprive us of the option of choosing a creed, and if our present institutions should be forced to make way for a legis-

\* The testimony of all men who have resided for any length of time in Muḥammadan countries, and who happen to have a literary reputation to sustain, is uniform on this point. Lane, Burckhardt, Niebuhr, Burton, Palgrave, are writers whose testimony cannot be pooh-poohed by any self-respecting man, and they cannot be suspected of being what are understood by fashionable writers to be 'fanatics.'

lature inspired by the genius of Muḥammad and the principles of the Qur'ān? That Islām calls men to the worship of One only God may sound well enough in the ears of those who are unaware of the fact that this maxim is, in the system of Muḥammad, not only opposed to image-worship, but is equally and more virulently opposed to the doctrine of a Triune God as revealed in the New Testament. And we shall yet have occasion to shew that if charity, chastity, and justice are principles of which humanity stands in need, Islām has not proved any more ameliorative in the countries where it has obtained full sway than are the idolatrous systems which it has displaced.

To regard Muḥammad, as many do, as the great champion of the doctrine of the Unity of God, is surely to forget that in no religious text-book is that doctrine more expressly taught than in the inspired records of the Jews and Christians.\* 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is ONE LORD' is a citation made from the Old Testament by Him who is the central figure of the New. Christ never taught any doctrine contrary to this; and in making the citation, He attested the truth it embodied. The proclamation of this doctrine to the idolators of pre-Islāmite Arabia was salutary and necessary, though there is evidence to shew that many of them were very far from mistaking the symbol for the Divine Being Himself. The doctrine of the unity of God is one which, as we have already seen, was believed in before Muḥammad came upon the scene;† so that not even can the claim to

\* Leland, *Deistical Writers*, ii. 236.

† To what we have already said at an earlier stage of this work (pp. 34—45) we may here add that, as far as can be ascertained, the first Arab who preached the Unity of God was Qoss, of the tribe of the Iyādites. This tribe was closely related to the Quraishites, and lived in Arabia Deserta, where the Christian religion had made great progress among the Badawīs. The man referred to is said to have been a distinguished poet and an eloquent orator, and proclaimed the doctrine at the celebrated annual Fair at 'Uqâtz. He was also an equitable arbitrator, and he acquired, by reason of his wisdom, the title of 'Philosopher of the Badawīs.' His sayings (of which we possess, unfortunately, few specimens) were intelligible only to the initiated. One point, however, he distinctly expressed—*viz.* that there was a better religion

originality be made on his behalf. His retention and authorization, moreover, of the myths and practices of the pre-Islāmite idolatry, shews how little the claim to purity of doctrine can be regarded as belonging to him.\* This feature of Muḥammadanism has been summed up by a modern critic in the following words,—Monotheism in itself, when the one God does not combine every thing that is divine, and when the conception of deity is one-sided and limited, does by no means possess the great value commonly ascribed to it.\* The mission of Muḥammad, as it has been called, would have had much more to be said in its favour, in the judgment of civilized men, if he had depended on moral suasion for its establishment, and had refrained, as Christ and the prophets did, from all attempts to spread religion by brute force. No man who has read sufficiently on the subject, seriously believes that the acceptance of the creed of Muḥammad on the part of the semi-savage hordes of Arabia was the result of spiritual conviction apart from considerations of rapine and conquest. And exactly the same might be said regarding those peoples in Europe, Asia, and Africa, who have at different periods given in their adhesion to that creed. When the inquirer studies the bearing of Muḥammad towards mankind, and duly weighs in the

than that in vogue at Makka. Qalqashandī (*voce* IVĀD) states, on the authority of 'Askari, that the first man who taught the *Tauḥīd* ('the Unity') at Makka was Qoss.' Muḥammad, in his youth, saw this man; but he was dead at the time when he assumed his 'prophetic mission.' These facts are given by Dr. Sprenger, *Life of Moḥammad*, 38. The account of Qoss which is found in the *Kutubul-Aghāni* has been lithographed at Delhi. A fuller notice is found in the *Ikdālud-Din* of Abū Jā'far bin Bābawāṭh. He is also mentioned by Masa'ūdī, i. 137. See also Freytag, *Arabum Proverbia*, i. 467, 189; and Shahrastāni, 437; Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 193.

\* Tiele, *History of the Ancient Religions*, 104. Cnf., also, Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, 73; Hallam, *Middle Ages*, ii. 6, 166; Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, ii. 405, 407; Renan, *Mahomet et les Origines de l'Islamisme*, in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, tom. xii, p. 1089; Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 249-50; The *Quarterly Review* (Jan. 1877), 216, 220. The whole history, in fact, of the conflict of opinion about Muḥammad among his contemporaries, shews that the Unity of God was not the difficulty, but the assumptions of Muḥammad: the same is true still:—Cnf. Irving, *Life of Mahomet*, 149, with 152.



balances of an enlightened and dispassionate judgment the means and methods authorized by him for the spread of his system, with the view of ascertaining how far it has been a 'blessing' to 'all the nations of the earth,' nothing but confusion, disappointment, and pain, can issue from the investigation. In addition, therefore, to the fact that Muḥammad enjoyed no monopoly in the propagation of monotheistic dogma, we have the awkward fact forced upon us by an overwhelming amount of historical evidence which flows in from every quarter, that this dogma by itself does no real good,—it leaves human nature where it finds it. The devils believe this dogma, 'and tremble',—the Bible tells us,—the Muḥammadan believes it, and goes on sinning.

We fail to see in the writings of any of the apologists of Islām any symptom of spiritual 'blessing' having resulted from the spread of that religion. Down even to our own day, the nations are still moved with dread and dismay at the mere mention of the name. They regard Muḥammadanism very much as a burning coal, which cannot be handled with impunity. Their uniform experience of the system for the past twelve centuries has been such as chills the blood with apprehension, despair, and shame. If it is in the nature of a system to prove itself a 'blessing' to the human family, surely the evidence should have been forthcoming within so long a period as that! But the result of that long experience has been that the Muslim race is still mistrusted and eschewed by enlightened nations. No other cause can be assigned for this remarkable phenomenon than that there is in all rational minds, a deep-seated dread of those special evils that accrue to any who may trust themselves to be on terms of amity with any Muḥammadan power.

That every Muslim one meets with is a demon in human shape is an opinion we neither teach nor share. And equally opposed to our belief is the opinion that the essence of all the evils which have attended Muḥammadan conquest and Muḥammadan rule, existed in concentrated form in the person of the

founder of Islām. But when it is asserted that the terms of the covenant made with Abraham as to the question of all families of the earth being 'blessed' by his seed have been fulfilled in Muḥammad and his adherents, we cannot help thinking that the apologists of Islām will have to reconstruct the history of the world during the past twelve centuries in order to make their point, and much like the captive Israelites who were required to make bricks without straw, they will have to reconstruct the history out of materials that do not exist. To maintain that Muḥammadanism, *quâ* Muḥammadanism, has been a 'blessing' to the nations in any such sense as to shew its superiority to that religion which it claims to supersede, is a task so obviously impossible and fruitless that it has never been attempted, and implies either an obliviousness of history or a perversion of language. The task could not be attempted, excepting in burlesque; and it would, by whosoever undertaken, prove to be one of the severest blows ever inflicted on the system.

How different is the verdict of history in regard to the 'blessings' which have from the first till now marked the history of the family of Isaac! No error could be more fatal to the real issues of the present argument than to confound Romanism with Christianity, and to attribute to the Incarnation of wisdom and mercy the persecution which the Papistical organization has ever carried on against scientific advance and intellectual freedom; yet no error is more common. Through failing to mark this essential distinction, we continually find even Christian scholars and reviewers talking as if the plague of Romanism were the legitimate outcome of the religion of Jesus, and as if Muhammadanism were, to say the least, as good as Christianity: to avoid mistakes, they should say 'Romanism' where now they say 'Christianity.' It was not Christianity that tortured Galileo and persecuted Dante and Savonarola.\* In spite of all the evils

\* Sale, *Prel. Disc.* Sect. vi (p. 102). Mr. Bosworth Smith and Mr. Lake uniformly confound Romanism with Christianity; and the religion of Christ makes, con-

wrought in the course of its history by priestism and ecclesiastical statecraft, how peaceful, how enlightening, how pure have been the influences and achievements of that religion which was introduced by Him who was emphatically and beyond all controversy, of the seed of Abraham. Notwithstanding all that was effected by the civilization of Greece and Rome,—for their sculpture, their letters, their architecture, and their military science,—it is summarily condemned by Islâm by reason of the accident of its association with image-worship; yet, such civilization as can properly be claimed as the pure result of Muḥammadanism, not borrowed from other nations, would figure very poorly by the side of the civilization of those ancient empires. But the civilization which dates subsequently to the founding of the religion of Jesus, and to whose benign influences so much of the good-will that exists among the nations of the world is traceable, contains elements which we seek in vain in the civilization of Greece and Rome, even in their best days,—tenderness, compassion, and mercy. But what sane man ever professed to discover these qualities in Islâm?

And how strongly do these Diviner attributes stand forth when we compare the genial history of the followers of the Messiah with the bleak and dreary waste that is left behind wherever the rapacity, oppression, and license which are begotten of Islâm have had free play and have done their legitimate work. If the religion of Muḥammad has been so much a greater blessing than Christianity has to the nations and families of men as some of its apologists would have us believe, it ought not to be

sequently, in the queer way they have of manipulating history, a very sorry figure indeed. On this subject the reader may consult with advantage Sale and the authorities adduced by him at the beginning of the second Section of his *Preliminary Discourse*. That the gulf between Romanism and Christianity is, in fact, greater than the gulf between Islâm and Romanism, was argued long ago by so high an authority as Dr. Samuel Lee,—though missionaries cannot venture nowadays to put the matter so without laying themselves open to the imputation of ignorance and wrong-headedness.—Cnf. Martyn, *Controversial Tracts*, 349.

difficult to trace out the signs of its benignity in those lands where it has held sway longest. What of Egypt, of Persia, of the Turkish empire, of Barbary, of its cradle and home,—Arabia? Every one knows that the simplest and most distilled form of the Islâmic faith is that which known by the name of the reformer Wahhâb, the ascendancy of which has blasted eastern and central Arabia for more than two generations. Standing within the ruins of what was once the magnificent palace of the Karmathian Kings, Palgrave writes,—This part of the building has been defaced into a Wahhâbî mosque, and has been woefully cut about to form a Mihrâb and the other arrangements of Muḥammadan devotion. And this is all that time and war have spared of the old royal Karmathian residence. ‘Those who built this must have been more civilized than its present occupants,’ was the first remark of my companion. Alas! says Palgrave, that it should be applicable not to this province of Kateef alone, but also to an entire empire from the Danube to the Tigris.\* Difficult indeed would be the task of any historian who should seek to shew that Muḥammadanism has proved, through the long course of its history to be a ‘blessing’ to the nations in any sense of the term worthy of Him who so repeatedly announced the promise to Abraham His ‘friend.’

In the present discussion it is important to bear continually in mind the usage of the word ‘seed’ in the Scripture-narrative so frequently quoted. It was repeatedly used by the Almighty in His intercourse with the patriarch. And it seems evident from the nature of the allusions embodied in the terms of the covenant, that He referred not to Abraham’s posterity in general, but solely and exclusively to that branch of his offspring which should descend through the Child of Promise. The sequel shews clearly that the ‘seed’ so frequently alluded to was no other than the seed of Isaac. And, as a matter of fact, it was the seed of Isaac

\* Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, ii. 192.

which inherited and colonized the Land of Promise in a sense in which it was never possessed and colonized by any other branch of the patriarch's family. The prophetic statement, moreover, embodied in 'the promise' as recorded in GEN. xv. 13, 14 has no application to any descendants of the patriarch's excepting to those who were descended from him through Isaac. The passage which thus identifies the future occupants of the land with this branch of the family, reads thus,—

'And Jehovah said to Abram—Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not their own, and shall serve them.\* And they shall afflict them four hundred years.† And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge. And afterwards shall they come out with great substance.'‡

It can hardly be necessary to point out how accurately this prediction epitomizes the connexion of the Israelites with Egypt. The locality of their enslavement, the nature of their experience there, the period of its duration, and that 'high hand' with which God eventually interposed for their deliverance, and how He 'judged' the Egyptians in their final overthrow,—all tell an experience such as was never sustained by any of the descendants of Abraham excepting those who descended from him through Isaac.

And there were circumstances connected with the birth of Isaac which are in entire harmony with that history of miracle which has so strikingly characterized his posterity, and which in fact prepare us for such a history. There was nothing miraculous nor even wonderful in such a circumstance as the birth of a child from Hagar. But the age and physical condition of Sarah are expressly and repeatedly mentioned in the Scripture narrative as being such as rendered such an event in her case of the nature

\* 'And shall serve them';—Or, as it may be rendered, 'And they (*i. e.* the Egyptians) shall enslave them.'

† 'Four hundred years';—That is, speaking in round numbers, and near enough for the purposes of identification. From the birth of Isaac till the departure of the Israelites from Egypt was 405 years.

‡ Priaulx, *Questiones Mosaicae*, 337; Fuller, *Works*, 375.

of miracle. So significant, indeed, was the birth to be that was to come of her, that Jehovah commanded even a change of name. Even her name was changed, and that by Jehovah Himself,—and this in commemoration of the birth of which she was to be the medium. And the significance of the name thus given is as remarkable and suggestive as the fact of its bestowal. Sarah was to lose henceforward the name that commemorated at once her barrenness and her hopelessness, and was to be known evermore under a name that should indicate at once the miraculousness of the birth, the covenant of Jehovah, and the regality of the race that should own her maternity. All this is embodied in the Divine communication which we find in GEN. xvii. 15, 16,—

‘And God said unto Abraham—As for Sarai, thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai,\* but SARAH† shall be her name. And I will bless her, and will also give thee a son of her. Yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations,—kings of people shall be of her.‡

So significant, moreover, was the promise connected with the posterity of Abraham through the yet unborn Isaac, that not only was the name of his mother thus changed by order of the Almighty, but the name of his father too. Thus, in GEN. xvii. 5, 6 we read,—

‘Neither shall thy name any longer be called Abram,§ but thy name shall be called ABRAHAM,|| for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.’¶

Now, whatever of remoter and spiritual signification these words may embody, they evidently have a nearer and literal interpretation. By such a reiteration of language the Divine Being dis-

\* ‘Sarai’;—that is, ‘Contentious.’

† ‘Sarah’;—that is, ‘Princess.’

‡ Fuller, *Works*, 378; Prieaulx, *Questions Mosaique*, 400.

§ ‘Abram’;—that is, ‘Father of exaltation.’

|| ‘Abraham’;—that is, ‘Father of a great multitude.’

¶ Prieaulx, *Questions Mosaique*, 381; Fuller, *Works*, 377.

tinctly guards His promise from misinterpretation, and conveys in the most explicit manner the promise of a numerous and varied offspring. And as if to preclude all possibility of mistake He confirms the promise by changing the patriarch's name on the occasion, and substituting for it a name embodying the gist of the promise itself:—and all this God confirms by an oath, in which, as He can swear by none greater, He swears by Himself. This changing of names was effected in order to indicate in the clearest and concisest manner the commencement of a new æra, and to distinctly separate the past from the future, and shew that now another and higher element was added to the life of the great patriarch. This significant alteration was delayed to the moment when the existence of Abrahāham was raised from the sphere of material blessings to that of spiritual ones, when he received the first religious injunction, and entered into a direct and internal alliance with the Almighty. And if the change of name was significant in the case of Abraham, it was almost indispensable in the case of his partner, since with her a new epoch commenced both in a physical and a religious respect. Hence she received a name indicating that her struggles and sorrows were passed, that she would have no longer to *contend* with her barrenness but that she would be the mother of nations and princes, and could therefore henceforth be herself regarded as a *queen*. Heretofore the names of the husband and the wife were widely different. While the former had always been a '*father* of elevation,' the latter was humbled by her fruitless efforts against the curse of *sterility*. But now, when the indestructible foundation for a great future was to be laid, their names, instead of being so widely different in sense, became nearly synonymous;—'the father of a great multitude' is language that is equivalent to 'the mother of nations and of kings of a great people.' Let it be borne in mind that all this took place in immediate connexion with the promise of the birth of a son to Sarah, and when Ishmael was already fifteen years of age.

In connexion with our study of the spiritual nature of the covenant there remains yet one other point to which we would beg the Muslim's attention—namely, the conflicting nature of the evidence of the Qur'ân and the Pentateuch regarding the character of Ishmael. The Qur'ân teaches that Ishmael, as well as Isaac, was *a prophet*. Thus, in Sûra xix (MARYAM) 55 we read,—

وَإِذْ كُنَّا فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا ۝

'Remember also Ishmael in the Book; for he was true to his promise, and was an apostle and a prophet.'

We may here observe incidentally in regard to the former part of this verse, that Muslim commentators explain that the 'promise' referred to was Ishmael's promise not to resist his father when being bound for sacrifice.\* Our reason, however, for citing the verse in the present instance is that it contains an ascription of the prophetic character to Ishmael. Not quite so plain and express, but the same in effect, are the words of Sûra ii (BAQR) 136, where we read,—

قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ ۚ لَا تَفَرِّقَ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ ۚ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ۝

'Say thou—We believe in God, and in that which hath been revealed to us, and in that which hath been revealed to Abraham, and to Ishmael, and to Isaac, and to Jacob and his descendants, and in that which came to Moses, and to Jesus, and to all the prophets from their Lord: no difference do we make among any of the whole of them.'

Here is Ishmael classed with prophets, and with those who were the means by whom new dispensations were established,—among whom men are pointedly forbidden to make distinctions. What

\* Sale, *Al Koran*, Sûr. xix (p. 252, note y).



is of still greater importance for our purpose, he is even said to have been the recipient and the medium of an express revelation from God,—a revelation in which Muḥammad, on his own behalf and on behalf of all The Faithful, is here commanded to ‘believe.’ When this verse is read in the light of the one last quoted, it is evident that in the mind of the author of the Qur’ān there was an intention to class Ishmael with ‘the prophets,’ properly so called. This is the interpretation which Muḥammadans put upon the passage; and they accordingly hold, as an essential element of their belief, that Ishmael was ‘a prophet.’\* Their traditions teach that he was constituted by the Almighty the prince of Makka and its first high priest; and that he preached to the unbelieving and idolatrous Arabs for a half-a-century.† He was possessed, it seems, of the celebrated ‘Prophetic Light’ which God first placed on the forehead of Adam,—a sign which was to appear on the foreheads of all prophets who should be born of him. Muḥammadan divines account for the continuance of the gift of prophecy in the seed of Isaac and the extinction of it in the seed of Ishmael, in the following way. This ‘Light’ distinguished all the prophets down to Abraham, and was from him divided into two,—the one on the face of Isaac and the other on the face of Ishmael.‡ The Light on Isaac’s brow was manifested on the brows of the many prophets which arose among his posterity, but that which appeared on the brow of Ishmael was suppressed and lay hid till the time of Muḥammad,—on whose forehead the Light reappeared.§ Muḥammadans are

\* Arnold, *Islām and Christianity*, 132-3.

† Crichton, *History of Arabia*, i. 100.

‡ The fact mentioned in a tradition cited by Dr. Sprenger (*Life of Mohammad*, 53-4) as to Sarah’s aversion to Hagar being occasioned by disappointed hope on seeing ‘the Light’ on Ishmael’s forehead, does of course not militate against this; for it refers to the time when Isaac was not yet born.

§ Shahrastānī, *Liber de Generatione et Nutriturā Mahometis*, cited by Dr. Pocock *Specimen Historiæ Arabum*, 53, 168; Prideaux, *Life of Mahomet*, 6; Morgan, *Mahometism Explained*, i. 185.

consequently prepared to admit that the posterity of Isaac has proved to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth by the continuance among them of the gift of prophecy and by preserving through all the ages which intervened between Ishmael and Muḥammad, the doctrine of the Unity of God. 'There is *no doubt*,' says the learned Muslim so often cited in the course of our work, 'that through the medium of the Jews the idea of God became much more elevated, noble, and sublime than it previously was\* among the Arabians in general.'† We would, however, remind the Muslim that in none of the allusions to Ishmael contained in the promises we have quoted from the Jewish Scriptures, is there any mention of the fact that either he himself should possess the gift of prophecy, or that that gift would at any period in the future be vouchsafed to any of his posterity. We know, moreover, of no extant predictions of his that can be quoted to prove his claim to such a designation. If he was indeed a prophet, a matter of fact so simple ought to be easy of proof. Men of intelligence, as many Muḥammadans are, ought to be able to put forward their reasons for believing it. Such men should perceive that some better reason should be forthcoming than that 'the Qur'ān says so.' They ought at least to see that no man of understanding could be won over to a belief of a fact of this nature unless some more tangible evidence than this were given in support of it. They may contend that there are other senses of the term *prophet* than that of 'inspired foreteller.'‡ We agree; and we ask simply for evidence that he was a prophet in any sense of the term whatsoever. Nowhere throughout the entire Scriptures of the Jews and of the Christians is the prophetic name, function, or character in any sense ascribed to him.

\* He alludes to the period prior to the settlement of large numbers of Jews in many parts of Arabia in consequence of the terrible persecutions of Nebuchadnezzar.

† Syed Ahmed Khan, *Essay on the Various Religions of the pre-Islamic Arabs*, p. 11.

‡ This calls to mind the different modes of inspiration believed in by Muḥammadans. To some men messages are communicated by Gabriel in *direct personal in-*

This completes the case as to the claims of Ishmael to be regarded as the Child of Promise. After a study of the evidence, as careful and as impartial as we feel capable of, we have no hesitation in saying that the more the question is investigated, whether in the light of the Jewish Scriptures or in the light of the authoritative book of the Muslim himself, the more groundless does the dogma prove to be.

Very instructive is it to note, in connexion with this whole subject, that the Qur'ân is most circumstantial in its relation of the narrative of the visit of the angels to Abraham and Sarah,\*

*intercourse*: such a man is entitled to be called a *Rasûl* (pl. Rusl, Rusul, Rusalâ, Arsul), 'a legate,' 'ambassador,' 'apostle.' To others, however, Divine communications are made *in dreams*, not necessarily by face-to-face intercourse of the angel: such a man is, in Muslim theology, entitled to the name *Nabî* (pl. Anbiyâ'), 'a prophet.' (The student of Hebrew will here readily detect the want, on the part of Muslim divines, of regard to the etymological signification of the word נָבִיא *naḇî*, 'to bubble up,' 'pour forth,' 'announce,' 'tell out.' We have here the essential difference between the Jewish conception of a prophet and the Muslim conception.) Between the actual communication through Gabriel and the revelation by dream, there is, therefore, among Muḥammadans this difference, that the former was employed to announce *some positive precept*, while the latter merely apprised of something about to happen, or conveyed some cautionary intimation. On the principle that the greater includes the lesser, a Rasûl may without impropriety be called a Nabî, but a mere Nabî is not necessarily a Rasûl. Muḥammad is held entitled to both epithets, and they are continually applied to him. The term 'Paighambar, equivalent to 'Rasûl,' is Persian, and is likewise continually applied to Muḥammad in Persia and Hindûstân,—as is also the hybrid and tautological combination *Paighan bar'i-Mursal*, 'a Messenger-depute.'—Cnf. Price, *Essay on Arabia*, 65–7; Rodwell, *The Korân*, 414. The reader will find some valuable contributions to the study of this point in Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, 85, 96,—a very high authority on all matters touching the usage of theological terms among Jews.

\* It has been pointed out, however, by Dr. Arnold (*Islam and Christianity*, 132) as a proof of Muḥammad's uncertainty respecting the history of Abraham, that the doubt regarding their having a son in their old age, is expressed in the Qur'ân by Abraham instead of by Sarah, and that the author of that book represents Sarah as having laughed at the promise of a son before that promise was given.—Cnf. Sale, *Al Korân*, Sûra xi (Hûd) 71–4 (p. 182–3), and Sûra xv (Hajr) 51–6 (p. 212), and the important Notes on those pages; Geiger (*Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen*, 130) gives the various arguments by which Muslim theologians have sought to explain away the difficulty.

and of the predictions of those celestial messengers concerning the birth of Isaac,—see Sûra, e-HÛD and Sûra, e-SAFFÂT *passim*,—and yet in the only passage in the entire book which can by any possibility be construed into a promise touching the birth of Ishmael, his *name* even is not so much as mentioned; while the allusion is, withal, so ambiguous and obscure that even Muslims themselves are disagreed as to who the person really was to whom Muḥammad intended it to refer. The passage occurs in Sûra xxxvii (SAFFÂT) 98, 99, where we read,—

وَبَشِّرْهُنَّ بِغُلَامٍ  
صَالِحٍ ۖ قَبْرُهُ فِي بَيْتِ  
إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ  
شَاكِرًا ۝

\*(And Abraham said)—O Lord, grant me a righteous (issue). Wherefore we gave him tidings of a meek youth.'

The admission by a Muslim that the passage alludes to Isaac would be fatal to his dogma regarding Ishmael.\* On the other hand, the denial of it involves the denial of the genuineness of the Mosaic records,—an alternative which would, as we have already shewn, be directly contrary to Muḥammad's own teachings. We see no escape for the Muslim from this dilemma.

It is necessary to observe, in conclusion, that the real question is, not whether Jehovah did or did not make any promise at all concerning Ishmael; but rather, whether it was in reference to him or in reference to Isaac that this particular promise was made—namely, that through his seed God had special blessing in store for all nations of the earth. There are only two persons to whom the promise could possibly have had reference,—Ishmael and Isaac,—for at the time referred to these were the only sons the patriarch had. And inasmuch as in the only inspired Records extant, Isaac is singled out, not once nor twice, as the Child of Promise, we are driven to say that until Muslims can produce documentary evidence proving that the facts are otherwise than as we find them recorded in the Jewish Scriptures,

\* Cnf. pp. 6-7, 10-12.

we think it is our duty, and also theirs, to accept the statements of those Records,—the oldest and the best-attested Records of the question under consideration, and of the age to which the facts appertain.

There yet remain some few considerations which should have weight with any Muḥammadan who feels that his concern is with the interests of truth itself rather than with those of mere prepossession or party. The roots of these considerations may be found largely in the following passage, GEN. xxii. 1—18, where we read,—

‘And it came to pass after these things that God did try Abraham,\* and said unto him—Abraham! And he said—Behold! here I am. And He said—Take now thy son, thy only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him up there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day,† Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men—Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son: and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said—My father! And he said—Here am I, my son. And he said—Behold, the fire and the wood;—but where is the lamb

\* ‘God did try Abraham’;—that is, He proved the patriarch’s faith and obedience. How severe the test was is shewn in the remarkable words of *ver. 2*. We are told in *HEB. xi. 19* that the faith of Abraham was sustained by the conviction he had that God could raise up Isaac from the dead. This extraordinary obedience was rewarded by fresh promises confirmed by G: d’s solemn oath (*vv. 15—18*).

† ‘On the third day’;—The distance is about fifty miles, and is not reached even by camels in less than twenty hours. In the East, it is said to be the third day if but one day intervenes. A man who ate nothing yesterday says that he has eaten nothing for three days.

for a burnt offering? And Abraham said—My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering! So they went both of them together.

And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

And the Angel of the Lord called\* unto him out of heaven, and said—Abraham! Abraham! And he said—Here am I. And He said—Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son—thy only son—from Me.

And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked; and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place JEHOVAH-JIREH† (the Lord will provide): as it is said to this day—In the mount the Lord will provide.‡

And the Angel of the Lord§ called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said—By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord! for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son—thy only son—that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore. And thy Seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.|| And in thy Seed¶ shall all

\* 'The Angel of the Lord':—Cnf. p. 13, note.

† 'Jehovah-jireh':—He thus gives, as the name of the place, the very words which he had lately used in encouraging his son. This phrase, modified into the single word 'Moriah' (which has the same meaning) was long retained as the name of the mountain on which the Temple was afterwards built by Solomon.

‡ 'In the mount the Lord will provide;' or, as the E. V. has it, 'In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen,' which is not quite clear. The writer of the Book of GENESIS means, in fact, to tell us that the saying of the patriarch on this unique occasion had passed into a proverb,—which proverb he here gives.

§ 'The Angel of the Lord':—Cnf. p. 13, note.

|| 'The gate of his enemies':—The gate being the place where kings and judges held their court. (Cnf. JOB v. 4, PSA. cxxvii. 5.) The meaning, therefore, is—Thy descendants shall rule over their enemies.

¶ 'In thy Seed';—that is, 'through or by means of thy Seed.' In GAL. iii.

the nations of the earth be blessed,—because thou hast obeyed My voice.\*

According to these ancient records of the family of Abraham, it clearly was not Ishmael but Isaac who was led forth at the Divine command to be sacrificed. The dogma of the Muslim is here confronted by the important consideration that the sacrifice dates from a period at least twenty years after the banishment of Ishmael from the patriarchal household. We have already seen that that event took place when Isaac was in his third year—GEN. xxi. 8.† There would consequently be an interval of some two-and-twenty years between the two events. What was the exact age of Isaac at the time of the sacrifice does not appear from Scripture. He clearly was not *very* young, for in *ver.* 7 (ch. xxii) he reasons with his father in a way that shews a comprehension of things beyond the years of a very small child. And from *ver.* 6 it appears that he was sufficiently grown to carry, on a long and weary journey across the mountains, the load of wood sufficient for the sacrifice.‡ Josephus, representing the ancient traditions of his race, tells us that the age of Isaac at that period was twenty-five—ANTIQQ. I. xiii. 2. No better authority for the events of that distant epoch can be named than Josephus. Next to the Mosaic record, no more trustworthy record than his could be desired in relation to the subject. By this time, therefore, the larger portion of a generation had elapsed since the removal of Ishmael and his mother from the home of the patri-

16 it is explained that these words intimate that the Messiah would be of the posterity of Abraham.

\* Priaulx, *Questions Mosaicæ*, 490 seqq.; Fuller, *Works*, 385.

† Cnf. p. 95.

‡ The uncertainty of Muhammad's knowledge respecting the history of Abraham is shewn again in the fact that he represents the command to offer up his son as having been given to the patriarch before Isaac was born or even promised; so that the son to be offered up could be no other than Ishmael! It shews how little confidence Muhammadan divines can have in the historical accuracy of the Qur'ân, that even in the face of so important a bit of evidence as this they still disagree as to whether after all Ishmael was the son who was to be offered up.—Cnf. Arnold, *Islam and Christianity*, 132.

arch. Upon Abraham's shewing himself so ready to confide in the fulfilment of the Divine promise regarding the unborn posterity of Isaac, the Lord swore 'by Himself' that He would pour blessing upon blessing upon the patriarch's descendants; and that by means of that progeny of his, all races of mankind should be blessed also.

It is very well worthy of note that several times in the course of the verses just cited, Jehovah, alluding to Isaac, says of him—'Thy son, thy only son.' The base-born Ishmael had long since been 'cast out' and disinherited in obedience to Divine command.\* Ishmael, as we have seen in a verse already cited, GEN. xvi. 2 (see p. 11), was the result of Sarah's unbelief. But 'the promise' must be really and literally fulfilled, and that in an honorable way. To have supposed otherwise,—to have supposed that Sarah was too old,—would have been to discredit the power and faithfulness of the Almighty Promiser. To suppose, moreover, that God meant at the time of making the promise, to depart from the ordinary course, and give the promised seed to the son of Hagar, would be to convict Jehovah of jesuitry and subterfuge,—of sanctioning an act of at least doubtful morality for the sake of saving His own word from failing. Besides, even Muhammadans themselves do not question the fact of Isaac having been born when Sarah was 'past age.' From the Muslim's standpoint especially, it was not strictly true that Isaac was the patriarch's 'only' son. The language reveals to us God's aversion to such a departure from His own arrangements as was connected with the birth of Ishmael, notwithstanding that the transgressor was one who stood so high in His favour as Abraham did. For the purposes of THE COVENANT, He will only reckon as Abraham's real son the child of Abraham's lawful wife. He thus gives His imprimatur to the practice of monogamy. If this was not so, why does He thus ignore the indisputable circumstance that there was another son? By the law of primogeniture, Ishmael had undoubt-

\* Cnf. p. 193.



edly the prior claim to consideration. Yet even the righteous and omniscient Jehovah here passes him by as if he had never existed, and speaks of Isaac again and again as the patriarch's 'only son.' In entire keeping with this we find that Jehovah in 'the promise' says—'in thy seed.' No course, perhaps, can be safer or wiser than to hear what the Bible has to say in explanation of its own utterances: we may, accordingly, turn to GAL. iii. 15—18, where we read,—

'Brethren, I speak after the manner of men\*:—Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no man maketh it void or addeth thereto. Now, to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. It does not say—And to seeds (as of many), but as of one—And to thy seed†,—which is Christ.‡ Now, this I say§—A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, The Law, which came four hundred and thirty years after,|| doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect:¶ for, if the inheritance is of The Law, it is no more of promise; but God granted it\*\* to Abraham by promise.'

\* In other words,—'Looking at it from the human point of view, as if it were merely an engagement between man and man.'

† Cnf. GEN. xxii. 18 in the LXX.

‡ Christ is named here probably as the Representative of all who belong to Him by saving grace, and who thus constitute 'Abraham's seed' (according to *ver.* 29).

§ He still keeps up the human comparison instituted in *ver.* 15,—'This, however, I say, speaking in human fashion,—The solemn promise of God cannot be annulled by the subsequent revelation.'

|| In the allusions which the inspired writers make to time, they speak according to the computation current among the people in whose immediate age they wrote. That computation was according to modern notions, the roughest and most inexact,—30 days to a month, and 360 days to a year. (Cnf. Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, ART. MONTH, CHRONOLOGY, YEAR.) The point to note is that it is not necessary to the apostle's argument that the popular computation of time, which he here follows, should be correct according to our scientific creeds. Cnf. notes in the *Annotated Paragraph Bible* of the Religious Tract Society on GEN. xv. 13, EXOD. xii. 40, ACTS vii. 6.

¶ *I. e.* to invalidate, or render it inoperative, to supersede or abrogate it.

\*\* Rather, 'freely gave',—as that which is the fulfilment of a voluntary promise, and not as a reward of mere obedience to 'law.' As to the 'inheritance,' see *HEB.* xi. 8—10, and 13—16.

Now, inasmuch as God had ignored the existence of Ishmael, we are entitled to expect that if He had intended that the blessing should come upon all mankind through the progeny of the patriarch's eldest son, He would have clearly embodied 'the promise' in more specific terms, and said—'In thy descendants'—*i. e.* in thy seed, whether through Ishmael or through any other—'shall all nations of the earth be blessed.' But just as Jehovah speaks expressly of the patriarch's younger son as his 'only son,' so here he makes the promise in reference to the patriarch's seed, —him whom Jehovah had Himself instructed the father to regard as his 'only son.' It is evident that by the term 'seed,' Isaac alone, to the exclusion of Ishmael, is here meant; for in GEN. xxi. 12 Jehovah expressly says to Abraham,—'In *Isaac* shall thy seed be called.' After this, the application of the phrase 'seed of Abraham' to the descendants of Ishmael to the exclusion of those of Isaac, or even to the descendants of Ishmael at all, would plainly be a perversion of the language of the only Records that supply us with our information in reference to the point. Though many sons were born to Abraham, yet at the time when he contemplated effecting the sacrifice, Isaac was spoken of by the Almighty as his father's 'only son.' Considered as to family membership, Ishmael was 'no more.'

How strikingly evident in this particular is the typical nature of the character of Isaac at this juncture of his life, and how close and suggestive is the analogy! There is nothing in the whole narrative of the Book of GENESIS, or in any of the allusions to the narrative which occur in the other Books of Scripture, to afford the faintest trace of countenance to the supposition that it was Ishmael who was ordered to be offered up in sacrifice. Such a supposition involves the annihilation of that analogy to 'the only-begotten Son of God,' and the setting aside as false or meaningless of the express statements of those Jewish Records whose inspiration and authority it is the avowed business of the Qur'ân to 'attest' and 'confirm.'

Another proof that the Seed of Isaac was the chosen seed may be found in the circumstance that the rite of circumcision, originally enjoined on Abraham, was *confirmed by renewed precept* to the descendants of Isaac in the time of Moses and through his agency. When we call to mind the fact that Muḥammadans, no less than Jews, regard circumcision as the distinguishing mark of The Faithful, the weight of such a fact as this should be overwhelming. There is no evidence whatsoever that any such renewal of the command was ever made in the case of the descendants of Ishmael. Even the Qur'ān itself, moreover, notwithstanding this confirmation of this ceremony in the case of the posterity of Isaac, does not in as much as a single verse make mention of the subject of circumcision at all.\* We find also that the promise 'to thy seed will I give it'—that is, the land of Canaan—was literally fulfilled when the Israelites were led into the land by Joshua amidst so many overwhelming indications of special Divine interposition. And although Muslims may urge that the land came into the possession of the representatives of the Ishmaelitish tribes at an early stage of the Muḥammadan period, we answer in the first place, that it is not proved nor is it provable that the people of Makka were really the Seed of Ishmael; and secondly, that whereas the Muslims obtained possession of the land by sheer violence and brute force†,—so that there was nothing about the conditions and circumstances of their conquest of the country that could lead mankind to regard it as differing in any respect from conquest ordinarily won in battle,—on the other hand, the entrance of the Israelites into the land was so associated with miracle as to render it evident that not by their own power, strategy, or skill, but by the special interposition of the Lord was the land being delivered to them. 'To thy Seed will I give it' is a promise

\* Arnold, *Islām and Christianity*, 114-15.

† The reader who would satisfy himself on this point should consult the great work of Gibbon, or Muir's *Annals of the Early Caliphate*.

which was in their case patently and literally fulfilled.

Attempts have sometimes been made to shew that the offering up of Isaac had both retrospective and prospective reference—retrospective, to the promise given to our first parents on the event of the Fall, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head,\* and prospective, to that Sacrifice by means of which more immediately the promise embodied alike in the Adamic and Abrahamic covenants, would eventually be realized. Of the latter idea the Christian finds evidence in GEN. xxii. 7, 8, where we read,—

'And Isaac said—Behold, the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said—My son, God will Himself provide† a Lamb for a burnt offering!'+

Even the author of the Qur'ân would appear to have had some inkling of the significancy of this marvellous utterance of the great patriarch's, when in Sûra xxxvii (SAFFÂT) 107 he represents God as saying,—

وَقَدْ يَنْقُذُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ

'And WE ransomed him with a *noble* victim.'

The person alluded to as having been so ransomed was the son whose immolation was in contemplation. Some suppose that the victim here alluded to was a ram: one tradition even goes so far as to assert that it was the very same that Abel had sacrificed,—it having been reserved in heaven during the intervening ages,

\* GEN. iii. 15.

† Or as the Hebrew might also be rendered,—God will 'see,' or 'choose.' In other words,—'When we arrive at the mount, the Lord will provide; our extremity will be His opportunity.' The double allusion we have mentioned is therefore not at all necessarily to be regarded as the only correct one. The reference may, in fact, not have been a spiritual one at all, but merely an indication of that trust in God, the wisdom of which experience had taught the patriarch and which was the distinguishing feature of his character.

‡ Fuller, *Works*, 385.

and brought out thence to Abraham on this occasion.\* Others are of opinion that it was a wild goat which opportunely came down from Thabîr, one of the hills near Makka,—the scene of the transaction having been in the neighbouring valley of Mina.† The question, as far as it affects Muḥammadans, is thus relegated to the region of conjecture, owing to the indefiniteness of the information embodied in their text. The word here translated 'noble' is by some rendered 'great' or 'large,' and they understand it to allude merely to the fact that the animal was fat and of considerable size. Others, again, suppose it to allude to the fact that this creature was accepted by the Almighty as the ransom of a prophet.‡ Lane and Deutsch, two very high authorities, both render the Arabic term by the English word 'excellent,' in view, apparently, of the fact that the victim is understood to have been supplied from Paradise.§ The passage is one of a large number in which the author of the Qur'ân involves his followers in a very labyrinth of truth, fiction, and discrepancy,—owing, as would seem, to his lack of education debarring him from the advantage of going direct to original sources for his information.||

The typical character of Isaac seems, indeed, to have been more or less definitely apprehended by his father. Thus, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. xi. 17—19), speaking of Isaac as being a figure of One who was to come, tells us that when the father of the faithful 'took the knife to slay his son,' he 'reckoned that God was able even to raise him from the dead;

\* The Muḥammadan theologians maintain that the horns of this substitutionary ram were for many ages suspended from the Miz'âb (or water-spout which conveys the rain-water from the roof) of the Ka'ba.—Cnf. Geiger, *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen*, 133—5.

† Bate, *Sacrifice in Islâm* (a work on the Doctrine of Sacrifice as viewed by Muḥammadans, which we hope will shortly be printed).

‡ Sale, *Al Koran*, Sûr. xxxvii (p. 369, note a); D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, Art. ISMAIL.

§ Lane, *Selections from the Kur'ân*, 72; Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, 133.

|| Muu, *Life of Mahomet*, ii. 187. Cnf. Price, *Essay on Arabia*, 72·3.

—whence, indeed, he received him in a figure.' The language in which the apostle clothes the idea is very striking,—

'By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.'

No less remarkable is the language of the apostle James, who says, ch. ii. 21,—

'Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar.'

The great patriarch is here represented as having actually completed the sacrifice of his son. The fact is important as shewing the view of the subject which passed without question among the Jews of the times of the apostles. Hence, we read those remarkable words of Abraham's in GEN. xxii. 5,—

'And Abraham said unto his young men—Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you'!\*

How strong must have been his confidence in the power of God and in the faithfulness of His promises, is evident when we remember that up to his time there was no instance of the return of the dead. Already had he, notwithstanding 'the deadness of Sarah's womb,' experienced in the birth of Isaac the fulfilment of the Divine promise, and witnessed the great power of God; and he was 'fully persuaded' that, happen what might, the completion of the fulfilment of 'the promise' could not be impeded even by the intervention of death itself. In the 'figure' of the ram the sacrifice required was really offered; and by its substitution for Isaac, Abraham received his only son back 'from the dead.'

Although in the case of the orthodox Muslim such a view of the case must, by reason of his peculiar prepossessions, be without effect, yet in the case of a Muslim who, in common with

\* Priaulx, *Questions Mosaiques*, 495; Fuller, *Works*, 385.

many of us, is still seeking light, as also in the case of believers in Jesus, it is of real importance and of great value. Of a similar nature is the argument that arises out of the language of Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, ch. iii. 8, where we read,—

‘The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying—In thee shall all nations be blessed.’

The ‘Gospel’ here alluded to as having been made known by the Author of Scripture to Abraham, could not have been any other than that which Paul himself understood by the term. And the heathen alluded to in the passage could have been those only whom he, as a ‘Hebrew of Hebrews,’ would understand to be such. To the same effect is the testimony of Christ in JNO. viii. 56, where we read,—

‘Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad.’

Thus was ‘the Father of The Faithful’—exercising, as he did, faith in the Christ who was yet to come—a Christian by anticipation, just as *we* are Christians by exercising faith in Him by retrospection. Old-Testament believers and New-Testament believers, Jew and Gentiles, the Seed of the bondwoman and the Seed of the freewoman, have but one Saviour, through all time.

Again, the Scriptures state expressly that the mere fact of one’s being of the seed of Abraham ‘according to the flesh’ does not entail of necessity the experience of the fulfilment of the promises. Thus, in ROM. ix. 7, 8, we read,—

‘Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but—In Isaac shall thy seed be called.’\*  
That is, they which are the children of (Abraham according to) the flesh, *these* are not the children of God; but the children of the Promise are counted for *the seed*.’

‘The covenant’ has reference to a particular fact,—the impartation of ‘blessing’ which was to affect eventually ‘all the families of the earth.’ The passage teaches that *for the purposes of that*

\* Cnf. GEN. xxi. 12 in the LXX.

*covenant*, the descendants of Isaac, and they alone, are truly and properly to be understood by the expression 'the Seed of Abraham,' according to the flesh. Those whose birth is connected with the Divine promise are the chosen and specific heirs of the blessing. Such was Isaac,—the representative of all believers who become children of God by special Divine interposition.\* The sense of the passage applies to the case of the Muslim as well as of the Jew; for large numbers of Muslims are descended from Abraham through Ishmael. In one view it applies, in fact, to all Muslims; for those of them who cannot claim this natural relationship, still make a boast of the connexion on the ground of ecclesiastical affinity. How vain all such boasting is ought to be evident to any man who takes a common-sense view of religious questions. The passage, however, is very pointed, and does not allow scope for any latitudinarian interpretation: it distinctly excludes the posterity of Ishmael, and teaches that one must be of the Seed of Abraham through a particular son—*viz.* Isaac—ere he can be entitled to deem himself within the meaning of the covenant,—even according to the flesh.

Nor is the New Testament alone in this view of the case; for even the teaching of the Qur'ân is to the same effect. Thus, in Sûra ii (BAQR) 124 we read,—

وَإِذْ بَتَلَىٰٓ أَبْرَٰهٖمَ رَبِّهٖ بِكَلِمَٰتٍ فَاتَمَّهِنَّ قَالَ إِنِّى جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ أِمَامًا مَّا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي ط قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

'O children of Israel, remember when the Lord tried Abraham by certain words which he fulfilled. God said—Verily I will constitute thee a religious leader to all mankind. He answered—And of my own posterity also? God said—My covenant doth not comprehend the ungodly.'†

\* Cnf. ROM. ix. 9 and GAL. iv. 23 with JNO. i. 13 and GAL. iii. 9 and 29.

† Cnf. p. 30. So rigidly did Muḥammad hold the principle, that though he taught his followers to believe in the efficacy of prayers for the dead, he refused to



We are not concerned with the authenticity or truth of the statements here recorded. It is enough for our purpose if we are able to cite from that book whose statements every true Muḥammadan is bound to accept without question, evidence of the uselessness of mere consanguinity if unaccompanied by corresponding character. The passage represents Abraham as seeking the pledge and promise of the Almighty in regard to the reception of the spiritual blessings by all his posterity indiscriminately. And the author of the Qur'ān represents him as receiving a distinct refusal.\* The Muslim may argue that the part here described as 'the ungodly' portion of the posterity of Abraham, must be the Jewish race as distinguished from the Ishmaelitish. Be it so; the effect is the same. The *principle* of the passage is that mere natural relationship to the patriarch is of itself of no avail before God. The same thing is taught in other places: thus, in Sūra iii (AL'I-'IMRĀN) 67 we read,—

ان ادلى الناس بابراهيم للذين ابتغوه ٥

‘Verily, the men who are the nearest of kin to Abraham  
are they who follow him.’

Thus does the author of the Qur'ān solemnly warn both Ishmaelites and Jews in respect of their pride of exclusiveness in regard to their great progenitor.

In this important particular, therefore, the Qur'ān harmonizes with the teaching of Paul,—That mere descent from ‘the father of the faithful’ is no secure ground for self-complacency even, much less for inflation and boasting,—whether the case be that of a Jew or that of a Muslim. The unfortunate thing is that Muḥammadans, with perhaps the exception of a single sect,—

pray for the peace of the soul of his own mother (Amina), because she happened to die before his announcement of his ‘mission.’ Her decease took place more than thirty years before that announcement, and when Muḥammad was a little boy: so that she had not even had the chance of becoming a follower of his.

\* Price, *Essay on Arabia*, 78-9.

the Wahhâbîs,—have allowed traditionists to make their theology for them; and it consequently happens that much of their religious belief is directly contrary to the teaching of the Qur'ân. Hence, some of their traditions teach that mere physical descent from Muḥammad constitutes a title to salvation,—a dogma which expressly contravenes what the passages just cited teach. According to these traditions, the two sons of Fâtima, who had often been fondled on their grandfather's knee and exhibited even in the pulpit as the hope of his old age, are regarded as 'chiefs among the youths of Paradise.'\* In other words, the fact of mere relationship, irrespective of personal character, does, after all, entitle to salvation. It is to be hoped that Sayyid Aḥmad Khân grounds his anticipation of acceptance with God upon a more intelligent basis than that of mere descent. At any rate, a sensible man could hardly feel well-at-ease in cherishing in regard to such a momentous affair as the salvation of his soul, an expectation that is distinctly opposed by a book which he believes to have been revealed by the Almighty as 'a direction and a guide.'

But of infinitely greater moment to every man than the question of blood-relationship or of ecclesiastical affinity, is the question of the redemption of his soul. No man ought to be so dark as to suppose that the decree of the Eternal King at the Great Assize will be influenced by considerations so purely outside himself. Even descent through Isaac does not of itself constitute one an heir of the promise; for 'if the Uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the Law, shall not circumcision be reckoned to him though he be uncircumcised? For, he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart,—in the spirit and not in the

\* Macbride, *The Mohammedan Religion Explained*, 48. As to the acknowledged character of one at least of these 'youths' the reader will recall what has been said on p. 249.

letter,—whose praise is not of men, but of God. For, in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.'

We have already had occasion to allude to the usage of the word 'seed' in connexion with the great subject which has occupied our attention. The word is so important in its bearing on the practical issues of the subject and in the place it occupies in the entire teaching of the Taurât, Zabûr, and Injil respecting the whole question of human salvation, that we venture to bespeak the forbearance of the reader while we dwell upon it a few moments longer before taking our final leave of the subject.

The word used—זרע—means, properly speaking, 'the act of sowing;' hence, 'seed:' it is therefore used of 'progeny' in general,—'descendants;' and does not of itself convey the idea of an individual, but rather of a plurality of descendants. The word is also used collectively—that is, of descendants in general, but as constituting an ideal unity;\* hence, David is promised a posterity which would descend from his loins and which would rear a temple to Jehovah; and he is told that the throne of this posterity would be established for ever—yea, that God would be to it a Father and it would be to Him a son. Thus in 2 SAM. vii. 11—16 we read,—

'Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee a house. And when thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. And I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom

\* Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, 89, 104. Cnf. Davies, *Hebrew Lexicon*, (s.v.) p. 189. The different shades of meaning are well brought out in the following passages,—GEN. xlvii. 54; xii. 7; 2 KINGS xi. i.

I put away before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever.'

This leads on to a wider view of the subject than has hitherto engaged our attention, and suggests that the promise made to Abraham had reference not to a single individual, but to a race,—through whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. That the allusion is not exclusively to one Person—*viz.* to Isâ ibni Mariam—is evident from *ver.* 14, of the passage just cited; where we read,—

'If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.'

Muḥammadans do not believe that Jesus was subject to sin.\* On the other hand, none but a superhuman Personage could bring about the realization of the absolute perpetuity of the race, and fully satisfy the remaining conditions of the prophecy.† This is very expressly corroborated by the apostle Peter in the course of his address to the Jewish assembly at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. The words are recorded in ACTS ii. 29—33, where we read,—

'Men and brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.‡ Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh,

\* Not, however, it is to be noted; from any admission on their part of the doctrine of His deity, but because, according to their theology, all prophets of God are *ipso facto* without sin,—a character which they indicate in applying to them the expression *ma'sûm*, 'preserved' (by God), 'simple,' 'artless,' 'without guile,' 'innocent' (like an infant). This term they apply to Our Lord as being 'one of the prophets;' they also apply it to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to David, to Muḥammad, —and to all whom the Qur'ân teaches them to regard as 'prophets.'

† Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, 104.

‡ The sepulchre of David on mount Zion was well known to those whom the apostle was addressing—Cnf. 1 KINGS ii. 10; NEH. iii. 16. Josephus relates (*Antiqq.* VII. xv. 3) that both Hyrcanus and Herod opened and plundered it. It remained till the time of Adrian.—Cnf. *The Annotated Paragraph Bible* (R.T.S.) in loc.

he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;\* he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ,† that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.‡ Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted,§ and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.'

At the commencement of this passage, Peter entreats a patient hearing whilst he shews that what he had been citing from the Old-Testament knowledge of his hearers, could not refer to David, the founder of the royal house, seeing that he had not been raised from the dead. He then proceeds to shew (*ver.* 30) that it must have been of the Messiah that David spoke prophetically, when he said that his soul was not left in hell, etc.; and he then points out (*vv.* 32—6) that he in whom this is historically fulfilled is Jesus of Nazareth.|| The intimate connexion thus shewn to exist between the prophecy just quoted from the Book of the prophet Samuel and the Lord Jesus Christ, is still further established in the sublime language of the Book of PSALMS,—notably in the Second and the Seventy-second Psalm, which throw very

\* The best MSS. read,—‘Of the fruit of his loins one should sit on his throne’ (that is, in perpetuity). Cnf. 2 SAM. vii. 11—16; PSA. lxxxix. 3, 4; and cxxxii. 11.

† Rather, ‘of the Christ,’ the long-expected Messiah, as the authors of the WESTMINSTER REVISION have rendered τοῦ Χριστοῦ in this place.

‡ Not the apostles alone, but multitudes of others besides them—Cnf. 1 COR. xv. 6. In the verse next following, the apostle proceeds still further to appeal to the senses of his hearers in respect of the evidences of the resurrection of Jesus in the manifestations of supernatural power which had suddenly come upon the apostles, and which the people who listened to him had witnessed with undisguised amazement.

§ Or, as it may also be rendered, ‘to the right hand,’ the place of favour and dominion (see PSA. cx. 1; COL. iii. 1; HEB. i. 3, and x. 12),—as is clearly shewn by His fulfilment of God’s promise (ACTS i. 4) in respect of the Divine gift the bestowal of which they themselves had seen and were still seeing. ‘For David is not ascended, etc.’; on the contrary, he calls Him who ascended ‘my Lord’—Cnf. MATT. xxii. 42 with PSA. cx. In either case, it is God’s power which has exalted Him and invested him with authority, and glory, and honor.

|| Cnf. ACTS xiii. 35—7.

important light upon the prophecy referred to.\* And upon the whole, it is evident that that prophecy comprises the following promises—*First*, a son is promised to David as successor on the throne of Israel, who should moreover build a temple for the worship of God:—*Second*, through that son a line of descendants who were to possess the throne of Israel conditionally upon their obedience to the Divine law,—with an assurance that even should they violate that condition, and thus forfeit the throne, the family, though subjected to chastisement, should not be utterly rejected, as the family of Saul had been:—*Third*, that out of that family should arise a glorious King, in whom the kingdom of David should be established for ever.†

The question whether the promise made in the garden of Eden respecting the seed of the woman, implied a destructive blow to be inflicted by the human species in general, or by some particular race of Eve's descendants, or by a single champion belonging to that race, was left unanswered at the time the promise was given.‡ It has hence happened that some writers, while admitting the prophetic character of the promise, understand the expression 'seed of the woman' to be equivalent to the entire human race. Hence, Kurtz says,—'Das ganze Menschengeschlecht (der Weibessame) soll den Kampf mit dem Urheber der Sünde kämpfen und soll ihn kraft des göttlichen Willens *siegreich* Kämpfen.'§ A similar ambiguity appears to attach to the language of the promise made to Abraham in GEN. xii. 3, where we read,—

'In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.'

\* Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, 104. Cnf. Ebrard, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 39-40 (edn. Edinb. 1853).

† Cnf. The *Annotated Paragraph Bible* (R.T.S.) in loc. The reader who would follow up still further the teaching of Scripture regarding the subject, should consult 2 SAM. xxxiii. 3-5; ISA. lv. 3; JER. xxxiii. 15, 26; ACTS ii. 30, and xiii. 34; HEB. i. 5.

‡ Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, 89. Cnf. ROM. xvi. 20.

§ Kurtz, *Geschichte des Alten Bundes*, i. 62-3.

On a subsequent occasion when the promise was repeated to the patriarch, the phrase 'in thee' is explained by the expression זרע, 'in thy seed:' thus, in ch. xxii. 18, we read,—

'And *in thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.'\*

In this expanded form the promise was, as already pointed out,† republished in the case of Isaac—GEN. xxvi. 4—and in that of Jacob—GEN. xxviii. 18.‡ The great patriarch himself would probably discover in the language of the promise allusion to a single individual.§ The Hebrew word is certainly used in this sense in several places, among which we may note GENESIS iv. 25 and xxi. 13.||

The difficulty, however, of uniformly restricting the application of the term זרע in this way is more and more apparent as the promise becomes amplified in process of time. Thus, in GEN. xxii. 17, 18 Jehovah says to Abraham,—

'I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.'

Similarly, in ch. xxviii. 14,—

'And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'

From these passages we learn that so far from the word 'seed' being limited to a single individual, it is used also in the widest sense imaginable.

On the other hand, it has been argued from the distinction which Paul makes between the singular and the plural in his Epistle to the Galatians (iii. 16),—'seed' and 'seeds',—and his

\* Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, 89.

† Cnf. pp. 190-91.

‡ For some notes on these passages consult the *Annotated Paragraph Bible*, in locis.

§ Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, 90.

|| Cnf. Fürst, *Hebrew and Chaldean Lexicon* (s. v.), p. 407.

exposition of the 'one seed' as distinctly prophetic of the Messiah, that the patriarchs may have been taught by such expressions as occur in the passages just cited from GENESIS to look out for an individual Saviour. It is not unlikely that they did by some process or other arrive at such a conclusion. Indeed, the language of Jesus Himself implies as much, where He says, in JOHN viii. 56,—

'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.'

Still, it is all but certain that Paul, in the passage in GALATIANS, did not mean to rest his inference on the Hebrew equivalent of 'seed.' His meaning rather is that the promise was not given to all the σπέρματα ('posterities' or 'descendants') of Abraham,—that is, to races descended from him,—but only to the single line of Isaac,—that line of which Christ, the κεφαλὴ and πλῆρωμα of all the Christian body, was the representative and consummation.\* Avoiding, as an inspired writer, such comparative trivialities as the mere technical terms of grammar, he could not express his meaning more simply than by placing in opposition the thing he meant and the thing he did not mean:—'Not, to thy *seeds*, but to thy *seed*.' A plural substantive would have been inconsistent with his intention: the singular noun used collectively,—admitting as, according to the usage of Paul elsewhere, it does, an organism regarded as an entirety (1 COR. xii. 2)—involves at the same time the idea of unity. Hence, in ROM. iv. 18, he writes,—

'That he might become the father of many nations, according to that which is written,—So shall thy seed be.'†

And in ch. ix. 6—8, he says again,—

'They are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but—In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the

\* Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, 89.

† So;—that is, 'as the stars of heaven.' Cnf. GEN. xv. 5 and PSA. cxlvii. 4. See Alford, *Greek Testament*, in loc.



children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.\*

Thus is the question no longer one of mere grammatical precision, but of theological interpretation, as has been pointed out by an eminent divine of the English Episcopal Church.† The question arises,—Is this a legitimate sense to assign to the expression ‘the seed of Abraham’? Doubtless the apostle intended by the phrase to designate, in the first instance, the Jewish people,—just as by ‘the inheritance’ was meant *the land of Canaan*. But in accordance with the analogy of Old-Testament types and symbols, the term ‘seed’ here involves two subordinate meanings:—First, with a true spiritual instinct, though the conception embodied itself at times in strangely grotesque and artificial forms, even the rabbinical writers saw that the true seed of Abraham was *ὁ χριστός*. In Him the race was, as it were, summed up. In Him it fulfilled its purpose, and became a blessing to the whole earth. Without Him the separate existence of the seed of Abraham as ‘a peculiar people’ was a phenomenon which had no meaning. And thus was He not only the Representative of the race, but also its Embodiment. In this way is the people of Israel the type of Christ; and in the New Testament, parallels are sought in the career of the one to the life of the other. Thus, in MATT. ii. 14, 15 we read,—

‘When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,—Out of Egypt have I called my son.’

In this way does the Evangelist apply the words of the prophet Hosca (ch. xi. 1) who says,—

\* In other words, God has not broken His promise; for He chose from the first but a *portion* of the seed of Abraham (which even Muhammadans maintain); and from the two sons of Rebecca He only chose *one*—see ROM. ix. 10—13. Alford (in his *Greek Testament*) has some very important notes on this subject.

† Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 139.

'When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.'

It is in this same sense that the apostle uses the expression 'seed of Abraham' in the passage we are considering. According, however, to the analogy of the interpretation of the Old Testament in the New, the spiritual takes the place of the natural,—the Israel after the flesh becomes the Israel after the spirit; the Jewish nation denotes the Christian church. And in this sense, Secondly, this same apostle interprets the expression 'seed of Abraham' in ROM. iv. 18, and ix. 7 (quoted above), and in GAL. iii. 7, when he says,—

'Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.'

But as the eminent authority to whom we have referred has pointed out, these two interpretations are not opposed to each other: they are not even independent of each other. Apart from Christ, the people called 'Christians' have no existence:—He is the source of that new and divine life which has made them Christians; and in Him they are one. By this link the apostle at the close of the Chapter connects together the two senses of the term,—dwelling once more on the unity of 'the seed.' Hence, in GAL. iii. 28-9 we find him saying,—

'Ye are all one in Christ Jesus: and if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.\*

Or, as it is paraphrased by the learned commentator already named,—'Ye are all one man in Christ; and if ye are part of Christ, then are ye Abraham's seed (for He is that seed of Abraham to whom the promise was given) and heirs according to promise,†—part of Christ, members of Him,—not merely the property of Christ, or the servants of Christ; but 'members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.'‡ The argument turns

\* See Alford, *Greek Testament*, in loc., and Ellicott, *Epistle to the Galatians*, in loc.

† See, especially, the remarks of Tholuck, *Das Alte Testament im Neuen Testament*, 44 seqq.

‡ Cnf. EPH. v. 30. Compare with this the striking language of GEN. ii. 23.

on the entire spiritual identification of the Christian brotherhood with Christ.\*

The form *σπερματα* is used in this same way by Josephus (*Antiqq.* VIII. vii. 6),—*παῖς ἐκ βασιλικῶν σπερμάτων*, 'A child of royal seed.' Paul, again, in another part of his writings, considers *ὁ χριστός*, 'Christ,' to be a term involving mystically the whole spiritual organism,—the Church united with Him.† Thus, in 1 COR. xii. 12 we read,—

'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.'‡

That is to say, the unity or oneness which characterizes and pervades man's natural body and its members, characterizes also and pervades Christ's spiritual body (the believing church) and its members.§

The evidence contributed by the facts which these passages present, shews clearly that the word 'seed,' as far as it bears upon the subject we have been considering, has both a limited and a broader application. By means of the 'seed' of Abraham through the son whom he was commanded to offer up,—by means of the incarnate Benefactor of the human race,—the regeneration of the entire family of man is eventually to take place. As in one representative man, the first Adam, all became dead men, so in one representative man, the second Adam, all will be made alive. And thus through the agency of the spiritual progeny of Abraham, 'the Father of the Faithful,' blessing extends to all the families of the earth. The last eighteen centuries supply a sufficient commentary on that interpretation of the Abrahamic promise supplied in the writings of the New Testament:—that not by means of any particular race or nation, but by means of

\* Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Galatians*, pp. 140, 147.

† Tholuck, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, ii. 230 seqq. (Appendix to Dissertation i.).

‡ Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, 90.

§ Cnf. The *Annotated Paragrap* (R. T. S.) in loc., and Alford, *Greek Testament*, in loc.

the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, of what tribe or nationality soever, the blessing promised to Abraham is destined to reach even to the darkest regions of human life, and to spread light and salvation everywhere, till 'even the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the Desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.'

Among the many men of culture who acknowledge the Islâmic faith, there surely are some who are prepared to approach the study of this subject in a spirit of impartial investigation and to give to their fellow-travellers on the voyage of life the benefit of the light which convinces and satisfies themselves. We have frankly stated the grounds of our own conviction in regard to the point which we have had under consideration. Most thankful should we be if any persons of the description mentioned would fully and frankly state theirs.

But we crave permission to utter a word of caution as to the method of argument. The arguments usually put forward by the apologists of Islâm are, generally speaking, wide of the mark. They involuntarily recall the traditional anecdote of the student who wrote on his examination-paper that though he was unable to answer any of the questions given by the examiner in relation to the subject, yet there were a great number of *other* questions which he could have answered if they had been put. To reply to the arguments we have put forward by shewing how great an improvement Islâm is upon the ancient Arabian idolatry amidst which it took its rise, is clearly not the form of argument which in the present instance is calculated to carry conviction to a careful mind; and the same must be said concerning what is so often pleaded,—that Islâm has performed a noble mission. All this is as every one can perceive, beside the mark. What is rather needed is that the effect of what has been here put forward should be neutralized by facts and arguments advanced by those who maintain the dogma against which we have been contending.

The entire Muhammadan world, no less than the Jewish and Christian, believe the Book of GENESIS to be, with perhaps the single exception of the Book of JOB, the oldest piece of literary composition which the human race possesses; and indeed the most ancient piece of alphabetical writing of which anything is known.\* Muslims readily avail themselves of the Biblical records when they happen to tell in favour of their views;—why do they discard them when they tell the other way? If the extreme antiquity and high authority of the Mosaic writings be regarded as lending to the argument an effect which is ultimate and decisive in the one case, why not also in the other? Our object has been to deal in a spirit of the most rigid impartiality with the materials thus at our disposal; and as far as we are conscious we have kept honestly to this rule. Not permitting mere Tradition to influence our judgment,—whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim,—we have taken, as our text-books, those Records only which Jews, Christians, and Muslims respectively are pretty generally agreed in regarding as their standards of appeal. We need hardly observe that we could not accept in evidence in relation to a matter so important as this the unauthoritative and conflicting materials of the uninspired records of either of the systems which have as their bases the Taurât, the Injil, and the Qur'ân. Thankful indeed should we be to know the steps by which thoughtful and earnest-minded men of the Islâmic faith have arrived at a conclusion the reverse of our own by working with the same materials, or with other materials drawn from the same sources.

We crave but one thing from the followers of Muhammad, —when will they grant it? Let them lay aside the prejudice and and bitterness so uniformly begotten of their Creed, and deal

\* Welsford, *Mithridates Minor*, p. 1 (edn. Lond. 1848); Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible* (i. 669) Art. GENESIS.

manfully with the facts here submitted to their notice. Let them eschew the authority of those European writers who make light of Christianity but do not embrace Islām. Let them not suppose that every European who writes on religious subjects is a believer in Christ and an authority as to the verities of Christianity; but remember that there are unnumbered millions of persons in European countries who would be as astonished and as disgusted as they themselves would be, if they were taken for 'Christians.' Let them beware of those who speak with patronizing pity of the hard measure which the advocates of Christ deal out to the adherents of Islām; and remember that such men are the enemies not of Christianity alone, but of revelation *per se*,—of all revelation whatsoever; and that consequently Islām is in their esteem as little entitled to human credence as Christianity is,—that both are alike impostures.

We do not expect to escape the animadversions of those who are ever ready, when they see that the followers of Jesus have the stronger side in an argument, to call upon them to be 'charitable.' But it is not always borne in mind by those who do so, that it is Muḥammad himself who challenges us to investigate his claims, and to judge of them by such phenomena as he himself put forward. Those who accept the challenge are assuredly not wisely designated uninvited or self-constituted critics. And what can we do but accept his own standard,—the standard by which he himself asks that his pretensions be estimated? It is only too evident from the facts that have been handed down by Muslims themselves, that The Prophet was less concerned about the redemption of mankind from sin than about the admission of his own pretensions. If this is not so, then language has no meaning and no function, and to judge of any man whatsoever by historical data, and even by the admissions of his own admirers, must be useless and even wicked. And as to what it

\* Prideaux, *Life of Mahomet*, 97, 98.

has become the fashion to call 'uncharitableness,' it finds in Muḥammad its most distinguished specimen. No language was sufficiently bitter or sufficiently condemnatory by which he might shew the violence of his hatred of all who disagreed with his religious views,—of those whom he classed under the general name of 'Idolaters,' but especially of Christians and Jews. With such an example before the Muslim as the highest of which he has any knowledge, we are not insensible of what are to him the difficulties of the situation.

To ask him to enter upon the study with his mind free from bias, would clearly be to ask what is impossible and absurd; for if he is not possessed of a foregone conclusion he is not an adherent of religion of any sort. But we ask him to enter upon the study in a peace-loving temper. And we, on our part, look to the One only God,—the Instructor of the patriarchs and the Proprietor of truth,—and ask that our words, as far as they are right, may be vitalized by His Holy Spirit, that the truth in its simplicity may assert its right in the conscience of Muslims, and that all religious darkness—theirs and ours—with its concomitant miseries, may come to a speedy and final end. ✕

THE END.

[The Second Chapter of Section i. of STUDIES IN ISLĀM will be devoted to the investigation of the Muslim interpretation of the Doctrine of The Paraclete.]

# INDEX I.

PASSAGES FROM THE QUR'ÂN CITED OR REFERRED TO.

	Page.		Page.
Sûra ii (BAQR) ...	46, ... 50	Sûra xix (MARIAM) 55, ...	7, 321
	124, ... 337		72, ... 48
	127, ... 48	Sûra xxi (ANBIYÂ) 85-6, ..	7
	130-33, ... 56	Sûra xxii (HAJJ) ...	27, ... 83
	133, ... 12		79, ... 56
	136, 13.321	Sûra xxviii (QASAS) 52, ...	45
	140, ... 13	Sûra xxix (ANQABÛT) 26, ...	14, 48
Sûra iii (ÂL'I-'IMRÂN)			38, ... 48
	66, ... 56	Sûra xxxvii (SAFFÂT) 97-113, ...	6
	67, ... 338		98-9, ... 325
	110, ... 54		99, 10, 11, 12
Sûra v (MÂIDA) ...	4, ... 27		101, ... 12
	72, ... 47		106-8, ... 9
Sûra vii (A'RÂF) ...	140, ... 54		112, ... 10, 11
Sûra xi (HÛD) ...	71-4, ... 324-5		197, ... 333
Sûra xii (YÛSUF) ...	84, ... 48	Sûra xxxvii (SWÂD) 45, ...	14
	111, ... 46	Sûra xcvi (BAYYINA)	
Sûra xiv (IBRÂHÎM) 40, ...	66		... 1-2, ... 34
Sûra xv (HAJR) ...	51-6, ... 324		



## INDEX II.

### PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE CITED OR REFERRED TO.

#### PASSAGES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

GENESIS.			Page.	GENESIS.			Page.
ii.	23,	...	347	xvi.	6,	...	197
iii.	15,	...	333		7-10,	...	84
iv.	4,5,	...	199		7-14,	...	93
	25,	...	344		10-12,	...	134
x.	21-30,	...	72		12,	... 143,152,	197
	25,	...	111		18,	...	197
	30,	...	111		21,24,	...	85
xi.	18,	...	111	xvii.	5-6,	...	319
	26,28,31,	...	83		15-16	...	319
xii.	1-6,	...	83		16,	...	186
	3,	...	343		17,	...	186
	7,	...	340		18,	... 180,182,187	
xiii.	12-13,	...	84		19-21,	...	186
	14-18,	...	85		20,	... 179,181,197	
xiv.	6,	...	73		21,	...	192
xv.	2,3,	...	195	xviii.	17,18,	...	190
	5,	...	345	xx.	1,	...	85,92
	7,	...	83	xxi.		...	64
	8-18,	...	196		8,	...	328
	9,10,	...	202		9,10,	...	89
	13,	... 98,330			9-12,	...	192
	13,14	...	318		12,	... 67,331,336	
xvi.	1-15	...	62		13,	...	197
	2,	...	329		14-18,	...	96
	4-6,	...	196		14-19,	...	89,94
	4-7,	...	89		14-21,	...	95

# INDEX II.

III

GENESIS.		Page.	EXODUS.		Page.
xxi. 21,	...	72,73	iii. 1,	...	80
31-3,	...	*85	2-14,	...	63
xxii. 1-18,	...	326-7	xii. 40,	...	330
2,	...	326	xxiii. 20,21,	...	63
5,	...	98,335	xxx. 20,	...	64
6,	...	328			
7,	...	328	NUMBERS.		
7,8,	...	333	x. 12,	...	73
13,	...	344	xii. 1,	...	80
15,16,	...	63	16,	...	73
15-18,	...	326	xiii. 3,26,	...	73
17,18,	...	344			
18,	...	190,330,344	DEUTERONOMY.		
19,	...	85	i. 1,	...	73
xxiii. 2,19,	...	86	xxxiii. 2,	...	68,73
xxv. 5,6,	...	194			
6,18,	...	138	JUDGES.		
9,10,	...	86	v. 1-5,	...	78
9,18,	...	67			
12-16,	...	181	1 SAMUEL.		
14,18,	...	21	xxvi. 1,2,	...	73
18,	...	92			
xxvi. 1-5,	...	190	2 SAMUEL.		
4,	...	344	vii. 11-16,	...	340,342
xxvii. 37,	...	119	14,	...	341
xxviii. 13-15,	...	191	xxxiii. 3-5,	...	343
14,	...	344			
18,	...	344	1 KINGS.		
xxx. 3,	...	195	ii. 10,	...	341
xxxiv. 19,	...	98	iv. 30,	...	139
xxxvii. 2,	...	98	xi. 18,	...	73
xli. 12,	...	98	xix. 5,	...	97
xlili. 8,	...	98			
xlvi. 54,	...	340			

	Page.		Page.
<b>2 KINGS.</b>		<b>JEREMIAH.</b>	
xi. 1, ...	340	ii. 23,24, ...	153
xix. 22, ...	138	24, ...	149
xxiii. 10, ...	153	xiv. 6, ...	143
<b>1 CHRONICLES.</b>		xxxiii. 15,26, ...	343
i. 29-31, ...	181	xxiv. 18,19, ...	202
<b>NEHEMIAH.</b>		xliv. 7, ...	139
iii. 16, ...	341	28, ...	139
<b>JOB.</b>		<b>EZEKIEL.</b>	
i. 15, ...	146	xxi. 21-3, ...	26
v. 4, ...	327	<b>DANIEL.</b>	
xi. 12, ..	143,144	v. 21, ...	143
xxiv. 4,5, ...	155	<b>HOSEA.</b>	
xxxix. 5, ...	142,143	viii. 9, ...	155
5-8, ...	153	xi. 1, ...	346
<b>PSALMS.</b>		<b>HABAKKUK.</b>	
lxviii. 7,8,17,18,...	78	iii. 3, ...	70
lxxxix. 3,4, ...	342	3,4, ...	78
civ. 11, ...	143	3-7, ...	80
cx. ...	342	<b>MALACHI.</b>	
i, ...	342	i. 2,3, ...	199
cxxvii. 5, ...	327	ii. 15, ...	196
cxxxii. 11, ...	342	<b>ECCLUSIASTICUS.</b>	
cxlvi. 4, ...	345	xiii. 19, ...	155
<b>ISAIAH.</b>			
xxxii. 14, ...	155		
xliv. 20, ...	100		
lv. 3, ...	343		

# INDEX II.

V

## PASSAGES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

	Page.		Page.
MATTHEW.		I CORINTHIANS.	
ii. 14, 15, ...	346	xii. 12, ...	345, 348
xxii. 42, ...	342	xv. 6, ...	342
MARK.		GALATIANS.	
v. 23, ...	99	iii. 7, ...	347
39-42, ...	99	8, ...	336
JOHN.		9, ...	337
i. 13, ...	337	15, ...	330
18, ...	64	15, 18, ...	330
viii. 56, ...	202, 336, 345	16, ...	328, 344
ACTS.		28-9, ...	347
i. 4, ...	342	29, ...	330, 337
ii. 29-33, ...	341	30, ...	193
30, ...	342, 343	iv. 23, ...	337
32-6, ...	342	24, ...	200
vii. 2-4, ...	84	EPHESIANS.	
6, ...	330	v. 30, ...	347
xiii. 34, ...	343	COLOSSIANS.	
35-7, ...	342	iii. 1, ...	342
ROMANS.		I TIMOTHY.	
iv. 17-21, ...	98	i. 16, ...	64
18, ...	187, 345, 347	HEBREWS.	
19-22, ...	187	i. 1-3, ...	64
ix. 6-8, ...	345	3, ...	342
7, ...	347	5, ...	343
7, 8, ...	336	x. 12, ...	342
9, ...	337	xi. 8-10, ...	330
10-13, ...	346	11, 12, ...	91
13, ...	199	13-16, ...	330
xvi. 20, ...	343		

	Page.		Page.
		<b>2 PETER.</b>	
<b>HEBREWS.</b>		i. 3, ...	186
xi. 15-18, ...	326	"	
17-19, ...	334	<b>1 JOHN.</b>	
19, ...	326	iv. 12, ...	199
<b>JAMES.</b>			
ii. 21, ...	335		

### INDEX III.

#### INDEX OF GENERAL SUBJECTS.

The names of Authors signify either that the full title of their works and the number of the edition quoted from are given in the places indicated, or that some important opinion of theirs is there cited. The former of these two classes of references indicate also the first occasion of an Author being quoted.

- Abdollahif, 234.  
 Abdu'l-lâh (father of Muḥammad),  
     14, 28, 29, 31.  
 Abdu'l-Muttalib, 15, 28, 29, 36.  
 Abel's ram, 31, 333.  
 Abraham, an image of, 26; his visits to Makka, 60-1; the topographical history of, 83-7; his descendants, 103, 106, 197; his laughter, 186-7, 324; his change of name, 319-20; mistakes of the Qur'ân regarding him, 324, 328; mere relationship to him of no spiritual avail, 337-9.  
 Abrahkha, Secretary of the prophet Jeremiah, 116. [267.  
 Abrogation, the Muslim dogma of, Abu'l-Faragius, 232 seqq.  
 ✓ Abu'l-Fida, 18, 20, 25, 88.  
 ✓ Abû-Tâlib, foster-uncle of Muḥammad, 35.  
 ✓ Abû-Tumân, the Arabian poet, 224.  
 Abyssinia, emigration of pre-Islâmite Arabs to, 38.  
 Adamic covenant, the, 333.  
 ✓ Adnân, remotest known ancestor of Muḥammad, 107 seqq.  
 ✓ Adultery, proof of, in Islâmic law, 283.  
 Ælius Gallus, 162.  
 ✓ *Ahâdis*, *Al*, *what*, 14.  
 ✓ Ahli Badu, the, *who*, 156.  
 ✓ Ahli Hadr, the, *who*, *ib*.  
 ✓ Ahmad, *who*, 70-1.

- Ahmed; see 'Syed Ahmed.'
- AIKMAN, Wm. Robertson, 217.
- Albordi, 81.
- ✓ Alexander the Great, 141, 161.
- ✓ Alexander the Maccabee, 163.
- ✓ Alexander Polyhistor, 166.
- ✓ Alexandrian Library, 205, 230.
- ✓ Al Fâsi, historian of Makka, 17.
- ✓ Algebra, the Arabs and, 225.
- ALI BEY, assumed name of Badia the Spaniard, traveller in Arabia, 77.
- ✓ Ali, cousin of Muḥammad, 19.
- ALI, Mrs. Meer Hassan, 1.
- ✓ Ali; see 'Syed Ameer Ali.'
- ✓ *Al-Khalasa*, the idol, 17, 23.
- ALLEY, the Rev. Jerome, 225.
- ✓ Alphabet, the Deaf-and-Dumb, 204.
- ✓ *Amina*, mother of Muḥammad, 338.
- Ammianus Marcellinus, 174, 233.
- ✓ Amr bin Luhai, 16.
- Amrû ibn al 'Âs, 230.
- ✓ *And ibn Zabîhain*, one of the many epithets of Muḥammad, 14.
- 'Angel of the LORD,' who, 63.
- Anti-Christ, the spirit of, 177.
- 'Arab' (the term), limits of signification, 157.
- Arabia, its place in Literature, 245; hope for, 241; and modern Christian missions, 208.
- ✓ Arabian women, before and after Islâm, 274 seqq.
- ✓ Arabian Half-castes, 101, 105.
- Arabians, attainments of the, 243.
- Arabic Numerals, the, 224.
- ✓ Arabs, intellectual characteristics of the, 222; the, before Ishmael, 157; credulity of the, 177; the, and Astronomy, 224; the, of Town and Desert distinguished, 275; their conversion to Islâm, 313.
- ✓ 'Arabu'l-'Araba, the, *who*, 157.
- ✓ Arafât, mount, 2.
- ARNOLD (John Muehleisen), 35
- 135-6, 139-40, 175.
- ARNOLD (Thomas Kerchever), 309.
- Arrianus, 161.
- Arrows, divination by, 27.
- ✓ Art and Islâm, 225.
- ✓ Ass, the Wild, 141 seqq.
- Assyrians, 175.
- ✓ Astronomy, the Arabs and, 224.
- Auf, *what* and *who*, 72.
- Augustus Cæsar, 162.
- Aulus Gellius, 233.
- Averrhoes, 224.
- Awf = Auf, *q. v.*
- Azlâm*, *what*, 22, 24.
- Azraki, 17.
- ✓ *Az-Zabîh*, *what*, 2.
- ✓ Ba'al, the idol, 25.
- ✓ Babylonians, 175.
- Badâwai, 157.
- Badawîn, 156.
- Badawîs, 131 seqq., 157 seqq.; their chivalry, 275.
- ✓ Baizâwî, the Muslim commentator, 8.

- Balqâ, 18.  
 Barrenness of Arabia in respect of intellect, 239-40.  
 Baruch = Abrakhia, *q. v.*  
 Beauty, the Muḥammadan estimate of, 288.  
 Bedawîn, 156.  
 Bedouins, 157.  
 Beersheba, 85.  
 Begum, the, of Bhûpâl, 254, 298.  
 Bel, the idol βηλ (Bêl), 25.  
 BERINGTON, quoted, 243.  
 Bhopâl, Bhûpâl; see *s. v.* 'Begum.'  
 Bidawân, 157.  
 Bishops, the English, and Slavery, 295.  
 BLACK STONE, The, of the Ka'ba, 21, 212.  
 Blessing, The, nature of, 203, 303, 314-15.  
 BOCHART, the learned, 142, 144.  
 Boheyrâh = Buhaira, *q. v.*  
 Bonamy, 235.  
 • Borac = Burâq, *q. v.*  
 Bostra, 35.  
 Bottle of water, Hagar's, 97.  
 Buhaira, the monk, 35.  
 ✓ Burâq, the Pegasus of the Arabs, 62.  
 BURCKHARDT, Johann Ludwig, his *Travels in Arabia*, 9, 167, 173, 174; *Bedouins and Wahâbys*, 29; *Arabic Proverbs*, 113; *Syria*, 79; and Muḥammad 'Alî, 308.  
 BURTON, Richard Francis, 21, 27, 105, 173, 174.  
 Cahtan = Qahtân, *q. v.*  
 ✓ Caliphs = Khalfas, *q. v.*  
 Cambyses, 101.  
 Canals between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, 205.  
 ✓ Caravans, the, of Al-Ḥajj, 183.  
 CARLYLE, Thomas, 127, 211.  
 Caucasian, Muḥammad believed to be a, 107.  
 ✓ 'Castles' in Arabia, *what*, 182.  
 Charles the Twelfth, 288.  
 ✓ Chinese and Hindûs, analogy between the, 175.  
 ✓ CHRIST a Muḥammadan, 57, 68, 69, 71; His resurrection, 342; his representative character, 346.  
 Christianity foretold, 69; and Catholicism, not identical, 264.  
 ✓ *Christian Remembrancer*, The, 163.  
 ✓ Christian Slave-girls in Islâm, 285.  
 Circassian wives, 288.  
 ✓ Circumcision, 88, 96; and the Qur'ân, 332.  
 ✓ Civilization, Muḥammadanism and, 301, 314, 316-17.  
 COLEBROOKE, quoted, 225.  
 ✓ Concubinage, in Islâm, 255; and Slavery identical, 299.  
 ✓ Concubines, Muslim, 284.  
 Consanguinity, uselessness of mere, 337-9.  
 ✓ Conversion to Islâm, *what*, 303, 313.  
 Coran = Qur'ân, *q. v.*  
 ✓ Coseida = Qasida, *q. v.*  
 Cossai = Qussai, *q. v.*  
 ✓ Courtship, in Islâm, unknown, 261.

- Covenant-making, God's, 201-2.  
 Covenants, the Two, 200-3.  
 Credulity, the, of the Arabs, 177.  
 CRICHTON, Andrew, 19. •  
 Cussai = Qussai, *q. v.*  
 Cybele, *what*, 81.  
 Cyrus, the expedition of, 152.
- ‘Dakka,’ in Arabia, *what*, 302.  
 Dante, the persecution of, 315.  
 ✓ Daughter's Price, the, 251.  
 ✓ David, the plundering of his sepulchre, 341.  
 DAVIES, Dr. Benjamin, quoted, 144.  
 ✓ Dead, The, prayers for, 337-8.  
 Death, the Figure of, 335.  
 ✓ Decay of Islâm, 178.  
 DE PERCIVAL, A. P. Caussin, 17, 20, 27, 42, 120.  
 DE SACY, Baron, quoted, 235.  
 Descent, patriarchal, value of, 106.  
 DEUTSCH, Emanuel, 35, 43, 69, 178.  
 D'ISRAELI, the Elder, 238.  
 Divination by arrows, 27.  
 ✓ Divorce in Islâm, facility of, 253 ; the triple, 273 ; odiousness of the triple, 272 ; at Makka, 254 ; and polygamy, 249, of husbands by their wives, 254, 271, 273 ; the sentence of, 249.  
 ✓ ‘Divorcer,’ The, an epithet of Muhammad's grandson Hasan, 249.  
 DODS, Marcus, 177.  
 DOLLINGER, 88.  
 ✓ Dowry, the, of Muslim divorcées, *what*, 250, 271.
- DOZY, quoted, 43.  
 DRAKE, William, 142.  
 Druzes, the, *what* they have borrowed from Islâm, 273.  
 Dschiketai, the, *what*, 150.
- ‘East, The,’ definition of, 136-41.  
 ✓ Education, Islâm and, 218-19.  
 Egyptians, the, deterioration of, 175.  
 Egypto-Arab, the, who, 101.  
 Emessa, 162.  
 ENFIELD, William, 233.  
 England and the slave-trade, 295.  
 ‘Enquirers,’ The Four, 36 seqq.  
 Euphrates, the, one of the limits of Arabia, 101.  
 EUSEBIUS, quoted, 166.  
 Eutychius and the Alexandrian Library, 233.
- ✓ Fahr the Quraishite, 107-8.  
 ✓ Faith not national nor hereditary, 307.  
 ✓ Fara', the Wild Ass, 145.  
 Fâsi, Al; see ‘Al-Fâsi.’  
 ✓ Fatalism the secret of Muslim inurbanity, 178, and of Muslim decay, 300-2.  
 ✓ Fâtima, the sons of, 339.  
 Fetish-worshippers, conversion of, to Islâm, 203.  
 FORSTER, Charles, his *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 95 ; *Mahometanism Unveiled*, 88 ; 68, 111, 135, 183, 200-1 ; against Gibbon, 126.



- ✓ *Four Treatises, The*, 124.  
 FREEMAN, Edward A., 69, 70, 243.  
 FRESNEL, Augustin Jean, his opinion of Muhammadan tradition, 105.  
 ✓ Gabriel in Islâm, 60, 77.  
 Galileo, persecution of, 306, 315.  
 ✓ *Gazal*, the, its relation to the Qasida, 40.  
 ✓ GENESIS, antiquity of the Book of, 350.  
 ✓ Genealogy of Arabian traditionists fictitious, 109.  
 ✓ Geography, the, of Muhammadans, 75.  
 GESENIUS, Guilielmus, 142, 144.  
 GIBBON, Edward, 15, 57, 113, 124, 211, 213, 219; on the Alexandrian Library, 231.  
 ✓ Girls in Islâm, 285; sale of, in Makka at pilgrimage-time, 298.  
 'Good Faith' of the Badawîs, 185.  
 GOOD, John Mason, 142, 143.  
 GRAVFS, Richard, 203.  
 Greeks, the Ancient, divination among, 26; decadence of the, 175.  
 GREEN, Samuel, 103.  
 Hadad, an alternative form of 'Hadar,' 181.  
 Hadesi, the, *who*, 157.  
 Hagar, 6, 9; her flight, 63; her dismissal, 65; her several removals, 89; the localities of her sojournings, 91; and Ishmael, 76; miscellaneous references to her, 60, 62, 64, 66, 67, 81, 87-95, 97-100, 102.  
 ✓ Hagarenes, the tribe of the, 166.  
 ✓ Hajj Caravans, the, 182.  
 ✓ Half-caste tribes of Arabia, 101, 105.  
 ✓ *Hamâsa, The, what*, 224.  
 HAMILTON, Sir William, 231.  
 ✓ Hanîf sect, the, *what*, 38.  
 ✓ Happy marriages in Islâm, 262.  
 Hâra = Hira, *q. v.*  
 HARDWICK, Charles, 88.  
 ✓ Hârith, son of Abdu'l-Muttalib, 15.  
 ✓ *Haggu'l-bint*, the, *what*, 251.  
 ✓ Hasan's divorces, 249, 339.  
 ✓ Hebrews, the, their analogy to the Ishmaelites, 175-6.  
 Hemionos, the, of Aristotle, 149.  
 HERKLOTS, G. A., 1.  
 Herodotus, quoted 25.  
 ✓ *Hidâya, The*, quoted, 249.  
 HIGGINS, Godfrey, 297.  
 Hîmâr, the, *what*, 145.  
 Hims, 162.  
 Himyar, the territory of, 72.  
 ✓ Hindûs, Muhammadans and, compared, 175, 221, 311.  
 ✓ Hîra, mount, 77, 41.  
 ✓ History, manufactured, 87.  
 Homs, 162.  
 Horace, quoted, 225.  
 ✓ Hubal, the idol, 16 seqq.  
 ✓ Human sacrifices, 15.  
 ✓ HUMBOLDT, Baron von, quoted, 236.  
 Hums, 162.

- ✓ HYDE on Circumcision, 88.
- Hyt, in Mesopotamia, the supposed home of Hubal, 17, 25.
- 
- ✓ Ibnī Ishâq, quoted, 41.
- ✓ *Ibnī Ismâ'il*, 'a Son of Ishmael,' an epithet of Muḥammad, 1.
- ✓ Idols in the Ka'ba, 210.
- ✓ Ignorance of Muḥammadans, 221.
- ✓ Imâms, The Twelve, 179, 181.
- Indomitability of Ishmael's descendants, 175-6, 184.
- Indus, one of the geographical limits of the Arabs, 164.
- ✓ Infanticide, female, in Arabia, 39, 278-9.
- ✓ Injil, the, *what*, 47, 77, 340, 350.
- Inquirers; see 'Enquirers.'
- ✓ Inspiration, Muḥammadan and Jewish ideas of, 323-4.
- IRVING, Washington, 20.
- ✓ Isaac, whether 'the Child of Promise,' 1, 8-13; his claims not opposed by the Qur'ân, 48-52; his descendants, 46, 48, 50, 59, 60, 104, 175-6; the heirship of, 194-5; prophecies concerning, 186; twofold aspect of the projected sacrifice of him, 333; his typical character, 333-6.
- ✓ Ishmael, epithets of, 2; views of Muḥammadans as to whether he was 'the Child of Promise,' 1, 46; different views of Muḥammadans concerning the sacrifice of, 2 seqq.; traditions con-

cerning, 6; Qur'anic references to, 8-15, 49, 325; opinions regarding the birthplace of, 9, 61; the character of, 12; and Muḥammad, 29; logical effect of the Islamic dogma concerning, 48; the descendants of, 49-52; a typical character, 59; as to his reputed connexion with Makka and the Ka'ba, 61, 66-8, 71, 82, 102; his topographical history, 67; Sarah's annoyance at, 89-90; the age of, 92, 95-100; the twelve sons of, 101; his descendants, 104, 332; the descent of Muḥammad from, never yet proved, 103; prophecies concerning, 137-9; believed to have been a prophet, 185, 321-3; his final exclusion from the household of Abraham, 193-4.

✓ Islâm, the word, 40; foretold, 69; independence of, 130; the decay of, 178; its attitude in regard to war, 205; races under its rule, *ib.*; different classes of writers on, 207; spread of, 215; and science, 224; and astronomy, 225; its attitude towards other religions, 247; and marriage, 248; its elements of greatness, 280; as a social and as a religious system, *ib.*; for whom suited, 304; as a conqueror, *ib.*; its fatal inadequacy, 309.

Israelites; see 'Isaac, descendants of.'

- Isthmus of Suez, Hagar at the, 81;  
canals at the, 205.  
*Istikhâra*, the, *what*, 27.
- ✓Jabal 'Arafât, 2; Hîra (or Nûr), 41,  
77; Marwa, 28; Safâ, 28.
- ✓Jacob, allusion to, in the Qur'ân,  
9, 49.
- ✓Jallâlu'd-Dîn, the Muslim commen-  
tator, opinions of, 34.  
*Jariya*, the, *what*, 293, 302.  
Jehoshaphat and the Arabs, 261.  
JENNINGS, David, 89.  
Jeremiah, the Secretary of, 117.  
Jerome, a paraphrase of his, 27.
- ✓Jews, Muslim aspersions on the,  
31 seqq.; character of the, 175-6;  
the, of Khaibar, 217; attitude  
of the, towards Islâm, *ib.*  
Jiggetai = Dschiketai, *q. v.*  
JOB, antiquity of the Book of, 350.  
Joctan = Yuqtân, *q. v.*  
Joctanide Arabs, the, 156.  
✓John the grammarian, 231.  
Joktan = Yuqtân, *q. v.*  
JONES, Sir William, 225.  
Joramites = Jurhumites, *q. v.*  
✓Judaism, typified by Sinai, 69;  
and Islâm compared, 177.
- ✓Julius Cæsar and the Alexandrian  
Library, 233.  
Jupiter, the, of the Arabs, 25.  
Jurhumites of the Hijâz, 60; Ish-  
mael marries among them, 61;  
an idolatrous race, 194.
- ✓Ka'ba, the Shrine of Makka and  
Head-Quarters of The Faith, 2,  
5, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28,  
61, 66, 100, 102, 106.  
✓*Kalima*, the, *what*, 57, 126-7, 221.  
KALISCH, Dr. M. M., 63, 94, 141.  
KEITH, Alexander, 135.  
KENRICK, John, 88.  
✓Keshab Chandra Sen, 258.  
Keturah, mother of some of the  
descendants of Abraham, 103,  
104, 106, 194.  
✓Khadaija } = Khudaija, *q. v.*  
Khadîja }  
✓*Khalasa*, an idol of the pre-Islâmite  
Arabs, 17, 23.  
✓Khalîfas, the Vandalism of the, 239.  
✓*Khâtimu'n-Nabî*, the, *what*, 35.  
Khattâb, a persecutor of Zaid the  
Enquirer, 40.  
✓*Khâra*, the, *what*, 27.  
✓Khudaija, first wife of Muḥammad,  
36, 37.  
Koran, Kuran = Qur'ân, *q. v.*
- LAKE, John Joseph, 210.  
LANE, Edward William, his *Selec-  
tions, from the Kur'-an*, 14, 189,  
204; *Arabic Lexicon*, 23; *Modern  
Egyptians*, 96, 211.  
LANGHORNE, Translator of Plu-  
tarch's Lives, 211.  
✓Laughter of Abraham, 186, 324;  
of Sarah, 187.  
Layard, his opinion regarding the  
Wild Ass, 152.

- Lebanon, mount; concerning the religious associations of mountains, 81.
- LECKY, W. E. H., 225.
- LEE, Dr. Samuel, 70, 71, 316.
- LENORMANT, François, 26.
- LEUPOLT, C. B., 208, 209.
- Liberty of Arabian women in pre-Islâmite times, 277.
- Literature, Islâm and, 223; Arabia's place in, 245.
- Light, the Prophetic, 35, 322.
- LOWTH, Robert, 71.
- Lying, whether sanctioned by Muhammad, 4.
- Maadd = Ma'dd, *q. v.*
- MACBRIDE, J. D., 21.
- Macrissi, on the burning of the Alexandrian Library, 234.
- Madagascar, one of the geographical limits of the Arabs, 164.
- Ma'dd, *who*, 118 seqq.
- Madîna Sûras of the Qur'ân, the, 50, 54.
- Mahammad } = Muhammad, *q. v.*  
 Mahomet }  
 Mahommed }
- Mahmûd, one of the names of Muhammad, 70.
- Maimonides, and Arabian learning, 244.
- Makka, the word, whether found in Scripture or not, 101.
- Mâlik, as an epithet of Amr bin Luhai, 17.
- Marcellinus; See 'Ammianus.'
- Mariage de convenance*, 261.
- Mariam Qubtî = Mary the Qopt, *q. v.*
- Marriage, in Islâm, 247; sacredness of, not understood under Qur'ânic law, 259; in pre-Islâmic Arabia, 277.
- MARTYN, Henry, his 'Controversy' with the Persian Maulvi, 34, 68, 75, 208, 209.
- Marwa, Jabal, 28.
- Mary the Qopt, 280.
- Masa'ûdî, traditions of, 102.
- Massa, the, of Scripture, is the same as Makka, 101.
- Ma'sûm*, application of the word, 341.
- Mecca = Makka, *q. v.*
- Mehemet = Muhammad, *q. v.*
- Mekkeh = Makka, *q. v.*
- Melo, on the descendants of Ishmael, 166.
- Mesopotamia, home of the idol Hubal, 18, 26; visited by the 'Enquirer' Zaid in search of 'the Religion of Abraham,' 41.
- Metamorphoses*, the, of Ovid, its bulk, 238.
- MILLS, Charles, 88; his opinion as to the destruction of the Alexandrian Library, 234.
- Milton on Divorce, 269.
- Mina, the Valley of, 2, 9, 31.
- Miracles limited to the Seed of Isaac, 50.
- Missions, The Three, 69; Arabia

- and modern Christian missions, 208.
- ✓ Mistake, the, of Muḥammad, 305.
- Moad = Ma'dd, *q. v.*
- MÖHLER, anent sacred mountains, 81.
- Moid = Ma'dd, *q. v.*
- ✓ Monogamy, as practised in Islām, 248—57.
- ✓ Monotheism, among the pre-Islamite Arabs, 34, 45, 312; inadequacy of Islamic, 313-14.
- Moon, Muḥammadans and the new, 225.
- ✓ Moors, the, their quarrel with Spain, 216.
- MORGAN, Joseph, 113.
- Moriah, among religious mountains, 81.
- MORREN, his Translation of Rosenmüller, 82.
- Mosaism not intended to be permanent, 267.
- Mosambique, one of the geographical limits of the Arabs, 164.
- ✓ Moses, the Mission of, 68-71.
- Mostahel, a, *what*, 273.
- Most-Araba = Must-'Araba, *q. v.*
- Mothers, their position in Islām, 289.
- ✓ Mountains (in religion), 81.
- Muad = Ma'dd, *q. v.*
- Muhâdzir, the idol, 17.
- ✓ Muḥammad, epithets of, 1, 29; birth of, watched for by Jews and Christians, 33 seqq.; his descent from Ishmaël never yet proved, 103; believed to be a pure Caucasian, 107; his wives, 258-9; not opposed to Slavery, 302; his fatal mistake, 305; his policy respecting concubinage, 268; inability to read and write, 49; foretold, 63, 68-71.
- ✓ Muḥammad 'Alī, conqueror of the Wahhâbīs, 308.
- ✓ Muḥammadism, before Muḥammad, 45, 312; social aspects of, 247; and Rome-ism compared, 177, 315-16; spread of, 215; its fatal inadequacy, 311.
- ✓ MUIR, Sir William, his *Life of Mahomet*, 4; *Testimony of the Scriptures*, 46; *Caliphate*, 206; *Rise and Decay*, 252; his opinions quoted, 4, 19, 111.
- MÜLLER, John von, 88.
- Mungo Park, anent the Africans, 203.
- ✓ Music, the attitude of Islām regarding music, 226.
- ✓ Muslim, the true, a picture of, 178; traditions, value of, in the present enquiry, 183.
- Must-'Araba, the, *who*, 100, 101, 105, 106.
- Mustariba } = Must-'Araba, *q. v.*  
Mut-'Araba }
- ✓ Nabī as distinguished from Rasūl, 324.
- ✓ *Nabit*, designation in Arabic of one of the tribes of the Ishmaelites, 181, 133.

- Nahik, the idol, 17.  
 ✓ *Nasâra'*, the, *who*, 69.  
 ✓ Nazarene, Nazareth, Nazarite, Nazr, 69.  
 ✓ Names, changing of the, of Abraham and Sarah, 319-20.  
 Nebaioth } consult 'Nabit.'  
 Nebajoth }  
 Nebuchadnezzar, his invasion of the Hijâz, 118.  
 Nemesis, the, of Islâm, 53, 305.  
 NEWMAN, John Henry, 223, 305.  
 NEWTON, Thomas, 67.  
 NIEBUHR, Karsten, 79, 171, 173, 174.  
 NÖLDEKE, Theodor, 43.  
 Numerals, the Arabic, 224.  
 ✓ *Nûru'n-Nabî*, the, *what*, 35.  
 ✓ Oath, The, of God, 329.  
 Obeyd = Ubaid, *q. v.*  
 Oelsner, quoted, 243.  
 Olympus, among religious mountains, 81.  
 ✓ Omar = 'Umar, *q. v.*  
 Omm = Umm, *q. v.*  
 Onager, account of the, 147.  
 ✓ One-sidedness of the Islâmic law of marriage, 262.  
 ✓ ORIGEN, quoted anent Circumcision, 88.  
 ✓ OROSIUS on the Alexandrian Library, 233.  
 OSBORN, Robert Durie, 17, 178, 226.  
 Osman } = 'Uthmân, *q. v.*  
 Othman }  
 Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 238.  
 PALGRAVE, William Gifford, 67, 105, 167, 173, 175, 178.  
 ✓ PALLAS, Dr., on the Wild Ass, 149.  
 Palma, Cornelius, and the bounds of Arabia, 162.  
 ✓ Palmer, the late Prof., 171.  
 Palmyra, in Arabia, 117.  
 Papacy, the, 216.  
 ✓ Paraclete, the, Muslim dogma anent, 70.  
 ✓ *Paragraph Bible*, The *Annotated*, 62.  
 Paran, the identification of, 69-82.  
 ✓ Park; See 'Mungo Park.'  
 Peleg, brother of Yuqtân, 111.  
 ✓ PENNANT, on the Wild Ass, 149.  
 ✓ Persians, the Ancient, 175.  
 ✓ Philoponus the Alexandrian, 231.  
 Phœnicians, the, disappearance of, 175.  
 Phylarchs, the, of Strabo, *who*, 166.  
 PITTS, Joseph, 225.  
 PLINY, anent the Saracens, 164.  
 PLUTARCH on Solon, 211.  
 POCOCK, Edward, 18, 25.  
 ✓ Poetry, the, of the pre-Islâmite Arabs, 274.  
 ✓ Polygamy in Islâm, 248-300.  
 Pompey, his Arabian conquests, 162.  
 Popery and Christianity not identical, 264.  
 ✓ POWER, George, 163.  
 ✓ Prayers for the Dead, 337-8.  
 ✓ PRESTON, Theodore, 136.

- ✓PRIAULX, Osmond de Beauvoir, 89.  
 PRICE (Major David) 3.  
 PRIDEAUX, Humphrey, 35.  
 Primogeniture, the law of, 199, 329.  
 Promise, the heirs of the, *who*, 336.  
 ✓Prophet, Muḥammadan and Jewish ideas of, 324-341.  
 ✓Protection of Women in Islām, 261.  
 Ptolemy, his opinion as to the locality of Paran, 71.  
 Pyramids, the, 171, 205, 329.
- Qaḥṭān and his descendants in Arabia, 5, 72, 105, 110-12.  
 ✓Qasīda, a, *what*, 40.  
 Qidāḥ, the, *what*, 22, 24.  
 ✓Qiyāmat, the, *what*, 213.  
 ✓Qoss, pre-Islāmite preacher of Al-Tauhīd, 312.  
 ✓Quraish, the Banī, their earliest known progenitor, 107-8; and education, 219.  
 ✓Qur'ān, the, corroborates The Bible, 47; as an educator, 220; its fatal inadequacy, 291.  
 Qussai, the successful adventurer in the Hijāz, 19.
- ✓Ra'la, the Jurhumite wife of Ishmael, 61.  
 ✓Ram, the, offered instead of Isaac, 333-4.  
 Ransom, the Noble, 333.  
 ✓Rasūl as distinguished Nabī, 324.  
 ✓RAWLINSON on Hubal, 25.  
 REHATSEK, his Prize Essay, 205.
- REINAUD, quoted, 21.  
 RELAND, Adrian, 71.  
 ✓Relationship to Abraham, value of, 100.  
 RENAN, Ernest, 38, 246.  
 RICHARDSON, Francis Johnson's Edition of, 23.  
 ROBINSON, Thomas, 65.  
 RODWELL, J. M., 38.  
 ROLLIN, M., 230.  
 Romanism and Christianity not identical, 306, 315; and Islām, 316.  
 Romans, did not conquer the Arabs, 162; Ancient and Modern, 175.  
 ROSENMÜLLER, quoted anent the topographical history of Hagar, 82, 91.  
 ✓RUSSELL, concerning Circumcision 88.  
 ✓Rūḥ, Muḥammadans are believers in, 213.  
 ✓'Sacrifices,' 'the Son of Two,' an epithet of Muḥammad, 14, 29; human sacrifices in Arabia, 15.  
 Sadāq = Sidāq, *q. v.*  
 ✓Safā, Jabal, 28.  
 Sāhibu'l-Azlām } *who*, 24.  
 Sāhibu'l-Qidāḥ }  
 ✓SALE, George, 1; on Arabian divination, 22.  
 ✓Sampsikera<sup>mus</sup>, derivation of the name, 162.  
 Saracens, their origin, 160; deriva-

- tion of their name, 160, 164; their conquest of Spain, 215; learning among the, 223.
- Sarah, her burial-place, 86; whether she ever visited Makka, 87; her quarrels with Hagar, 87 seqq.; her laughter, 187; her inspiration, 193; was God's instrument, *ib.*; change of her name, 319.
- Savonarola, the persecution of, 315.
- SAYYID AHMAD Khân Bahâdûr, Maulvî the Honourable Mr. 1, 3, 19, 44, 72-4, 102, 104, 113-18, 129-32, 213.
- SAYYID 'AMÎR 'ALÎ, Maulvî the Honourable Mr. 217, 226, 309.
- Schiechs = Shaikhs, *q. v.*
- Science, Islâm and, 224 seqq.
- Scriptures, The Holy, attitude of Islâm towards, 4, 6, 32-3, 44-8; value of, in the present controversy, 183; and Slavery, 297.
- Scythians, the, *who*, 164.
- Seclusion of women, 260, 266.
- 'Seed,' the word, 134, 317, 337-49.
- Seir, the position of mount, 68-9, 71-2, 77-8, 81.
- Senegal, one of the Geographical bounds of the Arabs, 164.
- Serdjis, *who*, 35.
- SEVENTY, The, apparent vacillation of, 143.
- Shaikhs, *who*, 166, 171.
- SHAW, on the food of the Wild Ass, 152.
- Shechs, Sheykhs = Shaikhs, *q. v.*
- Shi'as and Sunnis, Geographical limits of, 179.
- Shiechs = 'Shaikhs,' *q. v.*
- Shur, the Desert of, 81, 92.
- Sidâq, the, *what*, 250.
- Sinai, dogma of Muḥammadans concerning, 68-9, 71, 77-8, 81, 165.
- Skenitæ, the, *who*, 164.
- Skytheans, the, *who*, 164.
- Slave-girls in Islâm, 285.
- Slave-kings in Islâm, 293.
- Slavery, in Islâm, 291; mistakes regarding, 291 seqq.; where universal, 292; whether it is a beneficent institution, 299; and Scripture, 297.
- Slave-trade, the, England and, 295.
- SMITH, Bosworth, 41, 208-9; Dr. William, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 25; *Old Testament History*, 64.
- Solon, his rectification of chronology, 211.
- Son, Abraham's 'only,' 329-31.
- SONNINI, on Slavery, 292.
- Spain, the Saracen Conquest of, 216.
- SPRENGER, Dr. Aloys, opinions of, 17, 39, 43, 107, 108.
- STEPHENS, W. R. W., 224.
- STOBART, J. W. H., 29.
- STRABO, on Conquests of Arabia, 161-2.
- Sunnis and Shi'as, Geographical limits of, 179.
- Syed = Sayyid, *q. v.*



- ✓ **TABARĪ**, the Arabian historian, 95;  
 his tradition regarding Abrakhia,  
 116 seqq.  
 ✓ **Tabor**, one of the mountains in  
 religion, 81.  
**TACITUS**, anent Titus and the Arabs,  
 159-60.  
**Tadmor**, identical with Palmyra,  
 117.  
 ✓ **Tālīb**, Abū, foster-uncle of Muḥam-  
 mad, 35.  
 ✓ **Taurāt**, the, *what*, 2, 47, 340, 350.  
**TAYLOR**, W. C., 2.  
**Tebāla**, and divination, 23.  
**Thabīr**, confounded with mount  
 Moriah, 31.  
**Thales** and ancient chronology, 210.  
**Thūr**, confounded by Muḥamma-  
 dans with the 'Shur' of Scrip-  
 ture, 92.  
**TIELE**, C. P., 39.  
**Titus** and the Arabs at the siege  
 of Jerusalem, 159-60.  
 ✓ 'Towns' in Arabia, *what*, 182.  
 ✓ **Tradition**, importance of, in Islām,  
 14; self-contradictory nature of  
 Muslim, *passim*.  
**Trajan**, his conquests in Arabia  
 exaggerated, 162.  
 ✓ **Turk**, the, as a Muḥammadan re-  
 ligionist, 307.  
 ✓ **Turkish women** and children, 289.  
 ✓ **Ubaidu'l-lāh**, one of 'The Four In-  
 quirers,' 36, 38 seqq.  
 ✓ **UHLEMANN**, anent circumcision, 88.  
 ✓ **'Umar**, and the Alexandrian Lib-  
 rary, 232; character of, 236.  
**Umm Walad**, the, *who*, 280.  
 ✓ **Ummī**, *what*, 55.  
**Ungallantry** of Muḥammadans, 288.  
**Unity of God**, the, a pre-Islāmite  
 doctrine among the Arabs, 312.  
**'Urbān**, meaning of the word,  
 among the Badawīs, 157.  
 ✓ **Uthmān ibni Hārith**, 36, 38.  
  
**Voltaire**, his pronounced abhor-  
 rence of the Turks, 242.  
 ✓ **Wahhābīs**, the, and Divorce, 250  
 and Tradition, 339.  
 ✓ **WĀQIDĪ**, the Arabian traditionist  
 112.  
 ✓ **War**, Islām and, 205.  
**Waraqā**, one of The Four Inquire:  
 36-8.  
**WEIL** (quoted), 206.  
 ✓ **WELLSTED**, 226.  
**West African Slave-trade**, 292.  
 ✓ **WHERRY**, E. M., 4.  
 ✓ **Wild Ass**, the, 114 seqq.  
**WILSON**, Dr. John, 78-80.  
 ✓ **Wives**, lawful number of, in Islām  
 249; number of Muḥammad  
 258.  
**WOLFF**, Joseph, his *Journal*, 9  
 his *Travels and Adventures*, 11  
**Woman**, a chattel, 255; her d  
 nity ignored by law, 270;  
 Arabia before and since Muḥa  
 mad, 272 seqq.

- Women, happiness of Muslim, 263; and Divorce under Islâmic law, 271; pre-Islâmite, and war, 277; liberty of pre-Islâmite, *ib.*; policy of Muḥammad towards, 283; in Turkey, 289; and Slavery, 299.
- XENOPHON, his observation of the Wild Ass, 152.
- Yaman, ignorance of The Faithful who reside there, 221.
- Yuqtân, *who*, 5, 72, 110-12.
- Zabih*u'l-lâh, epithet of Ishmael, 2.
- Zabûr, The, *what*, 47, 340, 350.
- Zaid ibn 'Amr, one of 'The Four Inquirers,' 36-42.
- Zainab, Muḥammad and, wife of Zaid ibni Hârith, 260.
- Zamakhsharî, the Muslim commentator, 34.
- Zamzam, The Well, 15, 19, 92, 93, 95, 60, 61, 66.
- Zion, one of the mountains in religion, 81.
- Zuhaira, the Barî, 29.
- Zu'l-Khalasa, the idol, 23.



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